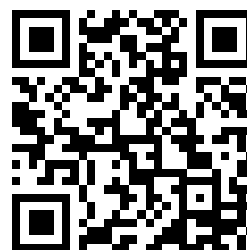


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*First Lt. Knight*

LIEUT.-COLONEL J. H. KNIGHT.







THE  
**5<sup>TH</sup> NORTH STAFFORDS**  
AND  
**THE NORTH MIDLAND  
TERRITORIALS**

(The 46th and 59th Divisions)  
1914 - 1919.

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By **LIEUT. WALTER MEAKIN.** (*Comd. in C.*)

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*With Nine Maps and Plans, and numerous Portraits.*



*By Appointment.*

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To the Dear Memory of  
The Glorious Dead  
of the 5th North Staffords.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THIS short history of the 5th North Stafford Territorials is largely due to the efforts of Colonel Blizzard. He was in command of the 5th Reserve North Staffs. from its formation in 1915 until 1919, when the Battalion was disbanded. During this period he received many letters and documents from officers and men, and these have been the chief materials for this history. On July 23rd, 1918, a meeting of relatives of officers and others, under the presidency of Alderman Goddard, Deputy-Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, was held at Stoke, at which Colonel Blizzard was present; and it was decided that a history should be written. A Committee was formed, and I was asked to act as editor, and as such have done my best to put before the people of North Staffordshire the story of these Battalions.

I should like to express my grateful thanks to all those officers and relatives of officers who have responded to my request for letters and information, including plans, without which my task would have been well-nigh impossible.

I also thank Mrs. C. J. B. Masefield for kindly allowing me to include her husband's poem, "Candle-light," which will be found on page 63.

A great debt is also due to Mr. H. Barrett-Greene, the Editor of the *Staffordshire Sentinel*, for many of the details.

Mr. and Mrs. Masefield and Mrs. Barrett-Greene have also kindly helped to arrange the materials.

I cannot help feeling how incomplete the history is, and how much has been omitted, but I hope sufficient details are given to recall the heroism of the officers and men.

It must not be forgotten that the Territorials were not professional soldiers. Their only reward is that of having done their duty. All gave up their comforts and their work, and very many gave up their lives; and, when it was all over, those who survived returned quietly to their civil occupations.

Mr. Winston Churchill said, in a speech to the Territorial Associations, in the early part of this year: "I could not meet this body without expressing on behalf of King and Country our profound gratitude to the Territorial Force for the services which they have rendered in the Great War. There have been killed in the Territorial Force more than 6,500 officers, and more than 105,000 men; and in the killed, wounded, and missing, 26,900 officers and 565,000 men are included. This force, which in so many quarters was hardly regarded seriously as a military factor before the Great War, has sent 1,045,000 men to fight against the best troops of Germany and Turkey, and, having

sustained these terrible losses, has acquitted itself on all occasions in a manner which has won the whole-hearted acceptance of their Regular comrades, and of the finest soldiers who have come to our assistance from the Dominions over-seas. Twenty-nine officers, and forty-two men of other ranks, have gained the supreme honour of the Victoria Cross."

WALTER MEAKIN, Lieut. 5th N. Staffs.

Darlaston Hall, Stone, Stafford.

*1st July, 1919.*

## CHAPTER I.

THE 1st/5th IN ENGLAND, AUGUST, 1914, TO MARCH, 1915.

FOR many years there had existed a Battalion of Volunteers for North Staffordshire. It had always played a prominent part in the life of the district, and the Colonels were always well-known men. Up to the War of 1914 its services had never been required for fighting, although in the South African War it supplied a draft of officers and men. When the Territorials were formed in 1908 to take the place of the old Volunteers, the Battalion took the name of the 5th North Staffordshire Regiment. It is not necessary to specify the conditions and terms of service, but generally it may be stated that the Territorials were formed for Home Defence. It was believed that, in case of war, the Regular Army would suffice for the offensive, whilst the Territorials would guard our coast. The Territorials were formed into Brigades and Divisions. The 5th North Staffs. formed part of the 137th Brigade, the other Battalions being the 6th North Staffs., and the 5th and 6th South Staffs. There were two other Brigades, the 138th, composed of two Battalions of Leicesters (5th and 6th), and two Battalions of Lincolns (4th and 5th), and the 139th, composed of four Battalions of Sherwood Foresters (Notts. and Derbys) (5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th). These three Brigades, with the necessary artillery, engineers, and other Units, formed the 46th (North Midland) Division.

It is necessary to bear these facts in mind, as, all through the War, both in the 2nd and 3rd Lines, the same Units were combined in Brigades and Divisions, and the men had nearly as much pride in their Divisions as in their Battalions.

The training of a Territorial Battalion always involved a fortnight's training in Camp, generally at the beginning of August, so as to include the August holidays; and on Saturday, August 1st, 1914, the 5th North Staffordshires had gone for their annual training to a camp near ST. ASAPH, in WALES. When they started, the probability of war was recognized, but until the last moment it was far from certain that GREAT BRITAIN would take up arms. The Battalion at ST. ASAPH was commanded by Lt.-Colonel J. H. Knight, and the other officers were Major A. E. Blizzard, Major C. E. Boote, Captains H. Johnson, Harry Clive, J. Griffith, H. P. Gamon, C. R. Barke, H. A. Ridgway, F. E. Wenger; Lieutenants S. H. Wood, G. J. Worthington, O. C. Bladen, F. E. Mason, C. Caddick-Adams, C. R. Keary, A. F. Wedgwood; Second Lieutenants H. D. Bindley, R. W. Copland, V. B. Shelley, G. S. Dix, G. B. Brown, R. W. Aynsley and L. Arrowsmith; Captain H. P. Magill was Adjutant, and Lieut. J. H. Riley, Quartermaster. Captain E. H. Brunt was the Medical Officer, and the Rev. T. H. Rabone, Chaplain.

At 12-30 p.m. on August 1st the Battalion had arrived at ST. ASAPH Station. After detraining it marched through the tiny city to the camp a few miles distant. Here the tents were already waiting and erected, save for the final pegging, by the advance party, sent on some days before, and very soon all ranks dispersed, expecting to use these little bell tents as their homes for a week or a fortnight. The occupation of these tents, however, was to be very short. At 1 a.m. on Monday, August 3rd, which was of course Bank Holiday, a telegram came through ordering an immediate "stand to." The Orderly Sergeants quickly awakened the men, and told them to get ready. There was wild excitement, and much running about to and fro, and all kinds of rumours were spread. "The feeling was tense, and everyone saw the future pregnant with exciting possibilities, and real work was coming for the 'Terriers' at last."

By daylight tents were struck, and the Battalion marched down to the station; but there were no trains, and the harassed Staffs were impatiently awaiting them. After resting by the roadside for some hours, it was decided to return to the camp, and remain there ready to move at any instant. It began to get cold as darkness came on, and a large bonfire was lit. At last, at 9-30 p.m., the order came to move, and this time the trains were there. Quickly entraining, the Battalion was soon bound for — Where? But no distant mysterious unknown destination was theirs—not then—but merely "Good old STOKE," where they arrived in the early hours of Tuesday morning. There they were dismissed with instructions to be ready at any time.

On Tuesday evening, August 4th, the mobilization proclamations were posted. At the various Drill Halls the men came in, enquiring if they were to assemble at once, and were told "not to worry," but to come again in the morning. The morning post brought the summons to assemble, and by the end of the day practically all the men had answered the call. Recruits had already come pouring in, and old time-expired men were joining up. Medical examinations were gone through, various forms were filled up, Paybooks issued, and then, after much "hanging about," the men were again dismissed. Next day, Wednesday, August 5th, the eight Companies, from STOKE, LONGTON, BURSLEM, HANLEY, TUNSTALL, NEWCASTLE, TRENT VALE, and STONE, arrived at the main Drill Hall, HANLEY; and were distributed in schools and other buildings. Blankets and ground sheets were issued out; and thus began the War-service of the 5th North Staffs. For nearly a week the Battalion remained at HANLEY getting ready, and issuing kit—clothing, boots, shirts, "housewives," hold-alls, identity discs, and such like. One day there was a great route-march through the Pottery Towns, which brought in more recruits. On Tuesday morning, August 11th, the Battalion paraded in HANLEY PARK, and Colonel Knight, after a few well-chosen words, gave the command to march off.





SOME OF THE 1st/5th OFFICERS, 1914.



On August 4th GREAT BRITAIN had declared war on GERMANY, and it was realised that the Country was in for a big War. It was also quickly realised that to do her share in the War the existing B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force) would not be sufficient, and that the only troops available to increase that force within the near future were the Territorials. It was true indeed that the Territorials were only formed for Home Defence, but all over the country the various Units, almost unanimously, volunteered for foreign service. Some of the men, however, could not do this, for various reasons; and also others, though fit enough for Home Service, were not so for an arduous Campaign. The 5th North Staffs., like other Units, had to fill up their ranks, but the enthusiasm was such that this was quickly done, and the dépôt at SHELTON was soon overrun by recruits. They were of all classes, and occupations, and were "the pick" of the youth from the neighbourhood. A large contingent consisted of men who had been educated at the NEWCASTLE High School. Recruiting was opened not only for the 5th North Staffordshire, but for other Units of the Army, the head recruiting place being STOKE Town Hall. The streets round it were crowded with men, and inside the buildings were masses of men struggling to be accepted, and passed by the doctors. It was an unforgettable sight, and, though there was much confusion, the men realised the difficulties, and patiently waited for hours to be allowed to become soldiers.

The 5th North Staffs. left HANLEY on Tuesday, August 11th, and marched to BURTON, leaving the recruits behind at the dépôt. They started amidst much enthusiasm, and many people accompanied them as far as BLYTHE BRIDGE, cycling, driving, or even walking, and giving them a cheery farewell. The first day's march was to UTTOXETER, through STOKE, MEIR, BLYTHE BRIDGE, TEAN and CHECKLEY, and they had the mid-day halt in a field near CHECKLEY. At this halt a telegram was read by Colonel Knight asking the Battalion to volunteer for foreign service, and as a result a wire was sent to the War Office, offering the services of the Battalion for abroad. The reply was received by Colonel Knight at UTTOXETER, accepting the offer. The next day, with a mid-day halt at TUTBURY, they marched to BURTON, where they arrived at 6 p.m., and were quartered in schools and breweries. They remained at BURTON for three nights, and on August 15th entrained for LUTON, a small manufacturing town in BEDFORDSHIRE, where they were quartered in schools and straw-hat factories. At LUTON the whole of the 46th Division was stationed, and the Battalion at once proceeded to train for active service. There was much to be done. The training for Territorials had hitherto been short, and it was always recognized that at least six months' further training would be required for active service. The officers, too, had much to learn, not only in training, but in dealing with Orderly Room, Stores, and all those many details which form so much of an officer's habitual life. The men entered into the spirit of the new life, and rapidly grew accustomed

to discipline, sleeping without beds, and all the various constraints and hardships of military life. The training at LUTON was arduous, consisting of drills, route-marches, and field days. In the early days of the War there was much less variety, as P.T. was in its infancy, and bombing, gas-masks, and Lewis-guns were unknown, and the men who first went out learned all these by personal experience. Meanwhile the recruits at STOKE were giving military displays in HANLEY PARK. Some of them continued to live at home, and went up each day for soldiering as if for business, some privates even arriving on parade in motor-cars, whilst the officers came on foot. After some weeks' training they were sent off to join the Battalion at LUTON. They marched down to STOKE station, accompanied by a band, and cheered by a large crowd, and on their arrival at LUTON received a warm welcome. As soon as the 1st/5th Battalion was filled up, on September 6th a new Battalion was created, and known as the 2nd/5th, and had its headquarters at BUTTERTON HALL, a large private house not far from NEWCASTLE. This Battalion supplied drafts of both officers and men to the 1st/5th, until that work was performed by the 3rd/5th, formed in the following year. Even in the course of training many men had to be weeded out, and sent to Provisional Battalions, their places being taken by others.

On September 28th the 1st/5th was inspected by Lord Kitchener. Naturally there were always rumours of departure. They were sometimes going to FRANCE, sometimes to INDIA, and sometimes to EGYPT. In October, at a conference of senior officers, the Divisional General stated that he had been definitely promised that the Division should go to FRANCE on October 30th. This movement did not come off, however, and the ordinary training continued without much incident until midnight, Sunday, November 29th, when an order came through which ran:—"The Brigade and the whole Division will march at 7 a.m. to-morrow. The Germans are now embarking." As events turned out this was only one of those ruses which later on in the War became so familiar to troops in ENGLAND, and which only resulted in fury on the part of Colonels and Generals; but at the time it appeared perfectly credible to many of the men. The previous day the Staffordshire Brigade had been promised a whole day's holiday for Monday, as they had been so hard-worked, and many officers in anticipation were on leave in LONDON. Immediately telephones and wires were set busy, and all managed to reach the Battalion before 7 a.m. on Monday. The Battalion, although this was its first experience of these sudden moves, was ready, and, at 7 a.m. on Monday, November 30th, marched off in the direction of HERTFORD "to repel the invasion."

The first night's halt was at HERTFORD, and on the next day the march was continued Eastward to BISHOP'S STORTFORD, so that even the old hands began to think something was going to happen. Next day, however, there was no march, and the Battalion remained at BISHOP'S STORTFORD, and





1st/5th OFFICERS AT CHECKLEY, AUGUST 11th, 1914.





carried on its training there. The next move was on December 9th, to SAFFRON WALDEN, in ESSEX, where the Battalion remained until its final move to FRANCE at the beginning of March, 1915. Before leaving for FRANCE, on February 19th, the Division was inspected by the King, who came with a large staff of officers. After he had inspected the various Units the whole Division marched past.

These days of training, many of the men say, were some of the happiest in their lives. The novelty and keenness still existed, and they were like a large happy family. The officers were often old friends, not only of the other officers, but of the men; and privates had to learn to call even their own relations "Sir," and also to realise that "brother Dick," who was a sergeant, must *not* be called "Dick." They had plenty of sport, and the other Units of the Division quickly learned that "the Potters" knew something about the game of football. There were, no doubt, trials, and one of them was inoculation for enteric. For the final dose, before going out to FRANCE, there were about five doctors in a tent giving the injections, and the men had to pass through in rotation. The story goes that one man thought he ought to have a dose from each doctor, but after three doses he succumbed! Just before going out Colonel Knight began to require new officers to replace those who were unfit, or who had joined other Units. The new officers were promoted from the ranks, and, without any preliminary training, joined the officers' mess, and had to pick up their work by experience.

On February 25th, 1915, final orders came to proceed to SOUTHAMPTON to embark for service with the Expeditionary Force; and, after a few days allowed for preparation, on March 1st the Battalion went by train to SOUTHAMPTON. The 46th Division had the proud distinction of being the first Territorials to go to FRANCE as a Division. Other Territorial Units had been to FRANCE in 1914, and been in the fighting in the Line with the Old Army, but the 46th went out as a complete Division.

## CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE 1st/5th IN FRANCE—  
MARCH 2nd, 1915, TO OCTOBER, 1915.

THE 1st/5th North Staffs. embarked at SOUTHAMPTON in two boats, one, the *Atalanta*, leaving on the night of March 2nd with "C" and "D" Companies, and the other party on the night of March 3rd. Both parties disembarked at HAVRE, and marched to the rest camp. On the morning of March 6th the whole Battalion entrained. They travelled all day and night, and, on the morning of March 7th, disentrained near the Belgian Frontier, N.W. FRANCE, at ARNEKE, a small country town with wide streets and roughly paved sidewalks deep in mud. In order to understand the movements of the Battalion, it will be necessary from time to time to take a hurried glance at the Military situation on the Western Front. One Battalion is only a small item in a large Army, but it is none the less an essential item, and has to play its assigned parts. If it is not concerned in a big attack it is holding another part of the Line, or waiting in reserve to go wherever it may be required.

When the Battalion landed in FRANCE the Winter was drawing to a close. After the wild excitement of 1914, when the Germans, after nearly reaching PARIS, had retreated to the AISNE, and the two Armies had gradually stretched North-West to the coast, a more or less permanent front Line had been established. In the First Battle of YPRES, in the late Autumn of 1914, the Germans had nearly broken this Line, but it had held; and for the rest of the year, and the early part of 1915, there had been little change. Both sides had suffered badly from the hardships of the Winter, and the fighting against natural difficulties due to rain and cold had been their chief occupation. In March Headquarters and Staffs began to think of the Summer Campaign, and soldiers learned that something was likely to happen before the month was over.

The Battalion had arrived at a critical moment, the men only just missing taking part in a battle before they had been a week out.

On the 8th of March they left ARNEKE, and marched to LE BORRE, near HAZEBROUCK. On the morning of the 11th they fell in, with as little kit as possible, expecting to be taken up in motor 'buses to NEUVE CHAPELLE, and the Battalion was divided into parties of 25. As no 'buses arrived the men had to march, and, after a march of 25 kilometres, passing through ESTAIRES at 9 p.m., they halted for the night at 11 p.m. on the roadside. Here they passed the night in a field, and were so tired that they slept in spite of the cold. Next morning they were awakened by a terrific roar. Looking about 100 yards ahead they could see an armoured train, and also a huge gun. The guns of the train were firing all the time, but the large one only fired every

half-hour. About 9 o'clock parties of wounded men came walking back from the trenches, and the procession continued all day. There were some terrible sights, and the men of the 5th North gave the wounded what food they had, and also water. In the afternoon they went back a short distance, and were billeted in barns, but had to "stand-to" in case they might suddenly be wanted.

The Battle of NEUVE CHAPELLE had taken place on March 10th, the Indian Troops taking a prominent part in it. At first the attack had been most successful, and there seemed a chance of a fine victory. Unfortunately there had been some mismanagement, and reinforcements had not arrived at the right moment. This had allowed the Germans time to recover and bring up their reinforcements. The result of this was that the attack had to be abandoned, the British being content to consolidate their gains, and consequently the 46th Division did not go into action. Whilst in this spot the 5th North Staffs. had their first experience of distant shell fire, though there were no casualties.

The custom in FRANCE was for newly arrived Divisions, before taking up a line of their own, to serve a tour of apprenticeship with another Division. This was to enable the men and officers to learn the details of trench work, such as, how to relieve trenches, how to hold the trenches, how to patrol, and generally how a Battalion must conduct itself in the trenches. Some trenches immediately north of HOUPLINES, North-East of ARMENTIÈRES, were those assigned to the Division.

On the 16th of March the Battalion left its Camp near ESTAIRES, and marched to METEREN, North-East of HAZEBROUCK. On the next day it was inspected by Field Marshal Sir John French. On March 20th the Battalion left METEREN, and marched to ARMENTIÈRES, where it was inspected in the Market Square by General Congreve, V.C., whose home is at CHARTLEY, in STAFFORDSHIRE.

On March 22nd half the Battalion went into the trenches. The instructors were the Queen's Westminsters and East Yorkshires. One platoon was assigned to a Company, and, when the men had had their tour, on the next day the remaining eight platoons took their places. The Line was quiet, and there were no casualties.

The Battalion left ARMENTIÈRES on March 25th, and returned to METEREN. On March 30th the whole Division was drawn up, and addressed by the Bishop of London. On March 31st the Battalion marched to BAILLEUL, where they spent the night prior to taking over a line of trenches for the first time.

There are several descriptions of these first days, when all was fresh and new. The men were usually billeted in barns, whilst the officers, if lucky, found quarters in the private houses. The farms in this part of the country were well supplied with accommodation, barns round two sides of the big brick yard,

and the house on the third side. The lofts would have been ideal, if the men could have been prevented from smoking amongst the straw. The men kept cheerful, but the roughly paved roads did much damage to their feet, and the frequent changes in the weather also caused considerable trouble.

While they were in reserve, during the Battle of NEUVE CHAPELLE, they had to live and sleep in their clothes, ready to start at any moment. At night the country beyond was bright with star-shells, and the guns went on and on "like doors banging at the other side of the house." The first tour in the trenches when they were there for instruction is thus described:—"The trenches we were in were quite close to the Germans, and during the day we were not able to put our heads over the parapet, except for a second at a time. At night all is safe, and you go out repairing wire in No Man's Land, which is full of old tins, thrown out by English and Germans, to make a rattle in case of attack. The wonderful thing about the Germans is their spy system. We had not been an hour in the trenches before they were shouting 'Ullo, 5th North, 'Ullo!' They have spies everywhere and telephones. The best of our trenches is that they are so close to the Germans that the German Artillery dare not shell us for fear of hitting their own men. The way we celebrated the fall of PRZEMYSŁ was most impressive. At night the whole British Line sent up star-shells, and raised cheer on cheer, and in reply the Germans howled, and gave us rapid fire."

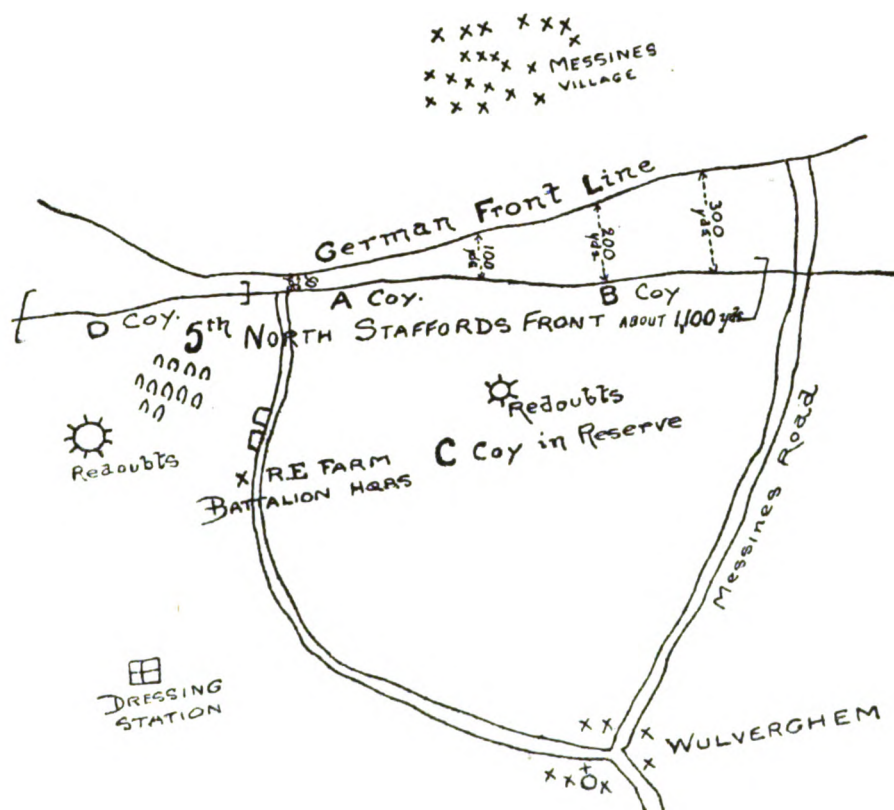
The Battalion had now been a month in FRANCE. It had wandered about seeing the country, and learning its geography. The men had begun to learn a smattering of French, and to appreciate the delicacies of estaminets and cafés. They had grown accustomed to Belgian billets and roads. They had had their share of inspections by Generals of all ranks, but up to the present they had seen little of actual warfare. They had been, as it were, in the background of the Battle of NEUVE CHAPELLE, and at ARMENTIÈRES had seen something of the trenches. The officers and men were full of confidence in each other, and all trusted and loved Colonel Knight. Before going into the trenches Colonel Knight at a parade addressed the men as follows:—"After eight months of wandering, we are on the point of taking up a line of trenches of our own. I congratulate you on being the first Battalion of the Brigade to be chosen. I need not remind you to 'quit yourselves like men.' Don't be rash and expose yourselves to needless risk. I feel sure that whatever you do will be to the credit of the 5th North Staffords. I wish you 'Good Luck.'"

On April 1st the Battalion left BAILLEUL, and took over a line of trenches near WULVERGHEM, relieving a Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment. "A" and "B" Companies went into the front Line, and "C" and "D" were in support in two farms. It was the first of the local Battalions to take up a Line of its own, and it was destined to occupy this part of the Line for nearly three months, until June 22nd.

The Division formed part of the II<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps under the Command of Sir Charles Ferguson.

WULVERGHEM is a village lying half-way between YPRES, on the North, and ARMENTIÈRES, on the South, and about six miles from each. The line of trenches, after bending round YPRES, curved Westward of WYTSCHAETE and MESSINES, and then curved Eastward of ARMENTIÈRES. The actual trenches held by the Battalion cut across the WULVERGHEM-WYTSCHAETE

### PLAN OF WULVERGHEM TRENCHES.



road, about a mile from WULVERGHEM, and extended Southward towards the MESSINES road. BAILLEUL is five miles west of WULVERGHEM, and NEUVE EGLISE lies two miles on the way.

The German Front Line was about 50 yards away on the North, and curved away until on the Southern end the distance was about 300 yards. Colonel Knight, in one of his letters, gave the following account of the first tour in the trenches:—"As I expected, both officers and men behaved like

bricks; the only trouble was to prevent them risking too much, as the trenches are dangerous, and we had the place of honour nearest the Boches, one trench being 40 to 50 yards off. 'A' Company had the worst place at first, but all the men did their share. There was a lot of sniping, and I am sorry to say two men were killed (A. Podmore and C. Bullock), and eight wounded, in the first tour. All the men were wounded in the head."

Where the trenches were so near there was not much shelling, as each side was afraid of hitting its own men, but instead there was always danger from snipers. The slightest exposure might lead to death, and even periscopes and broom handles were shot away, if held up for more than 10 seconds. The weather was abominable, and the trenches were very muddy, and full of water. The first tour lasted four days, and one of those days, April 4th, was Easter Sunday.

On leaving the trenches the Battalion went to rest in a hutment camp. The men soon got used to the trench life. They did four days in, and then four days out. Every tour there would be casualties, mostly due to sniping, or occasional shells. When they came out to the rest camp there would be fatigues of all kinds. They made dug-outs in the trenches to make themselves more comfortable, and also improved the communication trenches. The chief dangers, apart from sniping, were mines. One description of a mine operation was given by Signaller Reginald Massey:—

"Things have been much more exciting in this part of the Line during the last few weeks than they have been since we took the trenches over. About a fortnight ago there was an epidemic of mine explosions under the trenches. There seemed to be a duel between us as to who could make the most noise and do the most damage to each other's trenches; in fact, while we were at the rest camp, the Huns blew up a mine under a trench held by one of the Battalions belonging to our Brigade.

"It was left to the 5th North Staffords to avenge this, and they were not long in doing it. We had a mine laid under the German trench, which is only about 40 yards from ours. So, on the second evening after we had taken the trench over, it was suddenly decided to explode the mine, because our sappers reported a German sap a few yards away from ours. Before doing this, it was necessary to remove the troops from the trench to a place of safety." This was done, and the mine was successfully exploded, and no more was heard of the German sap.

Another letter from Colonel Knight gives a description of the trench life which became so familiar in FRANCE. "You never see a German fire over the top of his trench, but always through loopholes, and also from places behind their front Line. It is not always safe for us to fire twice from the same spot; at the same time they suffer badly from nerves, and do much more indiscriminate fighting than we do. Our nearest trench is about 45 yards from theirs, and the furthest—a third of a mile down the line—is from 200 to 260 yards. The





LT. COL. SIR ALEXANDER BANNERMAN, BART. BREVET LT. COL. C. R. BARKE. BREVET COL. A. E. BLIZZARD, T.D.



LT. COL. C. E. BOOTE, T.D.

LT. COL. W. BURNETT, D.S.O., M.C.



HON. COL. W. W. DOBSON, V.D.



LT. COL. A. E. F. FAWCUS,  
D.S.O., M.C.



LT. COL. A. J. HALL, T.D.



PLATE II.



LT. COL. R. S. HARDING.



LT. COL. H. JOHNSON, D.S.O., T.D.



LT. COL. H. H. STONEY, D.S.O.



LT. COL. F. E. WENGER, M.C.



MAJOR H. P. ALLAWAY, M.C.



MAJOR O. C. BLADEN.



MAJOR C. CADDICK-ADAMS, M.C.



MAJOR G. CAPRON.

great advantage is that they cannot shell them, though they do the 5th South Staffords on our right with some effect.

"There must have been a big battle fought, where our trenches are, about October or November. There are hundreds of graves, and soldiers of all nations resurrect at most inconvenient spots. So do cows and horses. There will be a pestilence if hot weather comes. Already we are short of water. We have got hare for dinner to-night, on condition I ask no questions. I hope to get pigeon-pie to-morrow, as I am sure spies have brought a lot to a deserted town a mile away.

"My men are still 'as keen as mustard,' which makes the entertainment here most encouraging."

Colonel Knight was most popular with the men, as I have said, and they regarded him as a hero, as he seemed absolutely heedless of danger. There are many stories told about him, and the following is a sample. One night he was out on patrol, and visited one of the listening posts, where the men were placed as near as possible to the German trenches, so as to hear any movements they may make. Wishing to find out if his men were awake he threw a turnip, and hit the sentinel on the neck. The sentry turned round, and asked in terms far from polite who was there. The Colonel's orderly answered, "Don't worry, it is only the Colonel."

The first officer casualty in the Battalion occurred on April 22nd, when Lieutenant Arthur C. R. Davies was wounded by a bullet in the leg during the return from the trenches on a relief. The first officer killed was Lieutenant G. S. DIX, on May 5th; he was out adjusting a loophole at night, when a flare went up, and before he could take cover he was seen and hit in front of the trenches.

On May 15th Lieutenant K. W. G. MEAKIN was shot in the head by a sniper, whilst working at the parapet, and he died on the following day. On May 23rd, Whitsunday, Lieutenant Edward LOXTON was also killed by a sniper in the night; when mending some wire entanglements, a flash of lightning unfortunately revealed his position to the enemy. On June 15th Lieutenant Ronald AYNSLEY was killed when out wiring. All these four officers, and several men, were buried in the Cemetery at BAILLEUL.

Whilst the Battalion was holding these trenches, a few miles to the North the British and French troops were undergoing the ordeal of the Second Battle of YPRES. It commenced on April 22nd, when, by means of poisonous gas employed against the French and Canadians, the Germans broke through the Line. The situation was saved by the splendid courage of the troops, but it was not until May 24th that the Germans, after a month's heavy fighting, abandoned the attack.

On May the 8th, during one of the German gas attacks on HILL 60, the gas clouds could be seen from the trenches at WULVERGHEM, and the men had to put on their makeshift gas-masks, which were made of cotton wool and



black gauze. They wore these for half-an-hour, but, as no gas came in that direction, they were then removed.

Further South, near LA BASSÉE, between ARMENTIÈRES and LENS, the British made an attack on May 9th. This battle is generally known as the Battle of FESTUBERT, and it continued until May 24th, resulting in a definite but limited advance for the British. Neither of these battles extended to the WULVERGHEM trenches, but each side was on the look out, and the North Staffords were rather disappointed at not having been drawn into the fighting.

The first distinction given to a man of the Battalion was the D.C.M. gained by Private G. BENNETT. On the 28th of April he was out on mining duty, when he discovered that there was gas in a sap. He informed the officer in charge, and three officers and one sergeant went to find out if it was fit to continue working. On entering the sap they were overcome by the fumes. On knowing this, Private Bennett and two others put wet sandbags over their heads and entered the sap. They got two officers out, and then had to give up for a few minutes to get breath. They tried again and again to enter, but were driven back. At last they succeeded in getting out the other officer, who was still alive. Pte. BENNETT was then overcome, but the other two men finally got out the sergeant, who was furthest in, but he was unfortunately dead.

One of the officers, Captain A. F. Wedgwood, gives another account of these trenches.

"Our last turn in the trenches was a very interesting one. For one thing I found an old trench running about 60 yards forward from our trench, and I got three men down there to-day in a tunnel under an old parapet, which puts us now in such a position, that we can go down night or day, and get our heads up just level with the grass and watch the German trenches, quite unobserved, and also post a sniper. Almost all the men we have had hit, have been hit from a great distance on the flanks. The Germans are artists at this game. They have steel-cored bullets, some of them 450 bore, for smashing loophole plates; they have silenced rifles, and they have air guns, which just shoot slugs. Also they have telescopic sights. Of their trench mortars luckily we have seen nothing, but we have had experience of their rifle grenades, which are deadly things, but very small and local in effect. One thing they have much better than we have, and that is their star-shells, which are perfectly silent, whereas ours go off with a big report. That means that if you want to see what they are doing at night, you give them fine notice, whereas if you are yourself outside attending to wires, or patrolling between the trenches at night, the first notice you have is to see your shadow on the ground, and then down you flop. No Man's Land, which is about 200 yards wide, opposite us, is now springing into rank vegetation, turnips, clover, wheat, all growing up, and no one quite knows what to do, whether to cut it or welcome it, or whether to let the Huns cut it, or shoot them at the job. I think our Huns, who are Saxons, are anxious to be friendly. For instance, on Easter

Sunday, two of them got on their parapets and waved white flags. The only answer they got was rapid fire all along the Line; now I hear that, to-day being a socialist festival on the Continent, two of them got up and waved red flags, and were both shot by the 5th North.

"Anyhow the weather is beautiful now, warm and splendid, with larks overhead at morning, and the cuckoo piping in the afternoon. Also not far from our reserve trenches, on a farm by the way, is a stream dammed by a shell-hole in which we bathe in the early morning, turning by that means the Huns' spite to our advantage."

The same officer again, writing on May 19th, describes another incident.

"Quite recently one of our sergeants shot two Bavarians, and did it rather cleverly. A sentry reported to me that he could see men at a point some 500 yards away down their trench, and, looking through a periscope, I was able to make out a string of sandbags being carried past a low gap in their parapet; so I put on the sergeant, the best shot in my platoon, with a 'synoscopic' rifle, and he fired his shot exactly to catch one coming by, and got him, we believe, in the shoulders. After that, until the afternoon, there were no more sandbags carried, and then again the procession was reported to me, and we bagged another in the neck. After that they filled up the gap, and I suppose carried on unharmed."

The ordinary life of the trenches, which became so familiar before the end of the War, but which seemed so strange at the beginning, includes one part which is always more or less tragic, that is, the return to the firing line from a rest billet. One of the men, Signaller Harold Diggory, thus describes one of these occasions:—

"Sunday once again, which is to us like an ordinary day. We have four days in a rest camp, which is three or four miles from the firing line. Our time is up, and we get the order to fall in with full packs, and 150 rounds of ammunition in our bandoliers. The order is given to load rifles, five rounds in the magazine. The officers examine the rifles to see if the safety catch is up; and the order is given to advance, and we start once again on our weary tramp to the firing line, which is three or four miles up the country. We carry heavy packs, besides our usual belongings, and we carry an extra day's rations, besides what we can get at the rest camp, such as bread. We also carry firewood, stuck in the back of our packs, our old cooking-tins tied or strapped behind. With the sticks we make our fire to cook our food. Out of six weeks four have been spent in the trench fighting.

"We look very much war-worn when we have tramped three miles. Colonel Knight gives us a halt, and we fall down full length on the dusty road, glad of a rest, for our heavy packs make our shoulders ache. Then we light our cigarettes, and chat with one another. When our five minutes are up the order is passed down the line to advance, and we scramble up as best we can, and our rifles are examined again to see that the safety catches are up, and





MAJOR H. CLIVE.



MAJOR A. COZENS.



MAJOR H. P. GAMON, O.B.E.



MAJOR J. GOODACRE, C.F., M.C.



MAJOR H. F. GREEN.



MAJOR J. GRIFFITH, T.D.



MAJOR H. POCHIN, M.C.



MAJOR T. H. RABONE, C.F.

PLATE IV.



MAJOR T. E. TILDESLEY, M.C.



CAPT. T. G. ABBOTS.



CAPT. C. N. ADAMS.



CAPT. R. BARRON, M.C.



CAPT. T. BASSETT, M.C.



CAPT. F. D. BENNETT.



CAPT. H. D. BINDLEY.



CAPT. W. N. BLADES, M.C.

we sling them over our shoulders, and off we go. Soon bullets begin to drop round about, and the order is given, no smoking or talking for the rest of the journey.

"The star-lights, which they use for fighting by night, begin to shoot up in the distance, and we go through a deserted town, most of which is in ruins. Still we trudge on, regardless of this, for our eyes become accustomed to these things. We are out in the open country, and the bullets begin to sing past us. We used to duck when they came close to our heads, but now we know that is useless, for when you hear them it is too late to duck, for they are hundreds of yards past. So now we take no notice. We pass through an old village which is absolutely blown to atoms; scarcely one house that is worth building up. A few walls of the once beautiful old Church stand like a huge skeleton, which seems to say, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' It is Sunday, and this picture of this old Church reminds us of the dear old peaceful ENGLAND, and those we have left behind, who no doubt are praying for our safety at this particular time, and we can even imagine that we can hear the strains of the organ and the sounds of singing. We are suddenly awakened from reverie by bullets striking up against the old ruins. We are glad when we are once again in the open country. Our artillery are booming away in the distance, and the German batteries are answering, making the very earth tremble. The star-lights shoot up in the sky, lighting up the whole scene, and the smell around here is terrible. We are now nearing the lines, and there is the incessant crack of hundreds of rifles which sound close to our ears. Still on we go. We are met here by our guides, who take the various platoons, some to the trenches about three or four hundred yards distant, some to the fort, others to a building, which seems to have dodged the German shells. The building is a farmhouse, which is partially destroyed, part of the roof having been blown away by shells, but still we are glad of a bit of shelter. Those of our comrades, who have made their last stand for the old country, sleep here by the old farmstead, and rough wooden crosses, made from our firewood, stand as a mark of respect, and seem to say: 'At last we are safe from shot and shell, for we are at rest.' Another Sunday has passed away, and still the game goes on."

This description will bring back to many the incidents of the campaign. It must not be forgotten that though there were days of battle marked out with all their tragedies, yet most of the days were such as this described. All those who were in FRANCE can recall these days of routine, of arriving at and quitting trenches, of the long and tiring communication trenches, of the whispered orders passed up and down, the gleam of the star-lights, and the never-ending boom of the artillery, sometimes near, and sometimes only like the distant sound of the sea.

When the Battalion was in the Line, the two support Companies occupied two farms, known as "Burnt Farm" and "R.E. Farm."



This is a description of one of these farms:—

“The trenches are 200 yards in front, and another 150 yards in front are the German trenches. Round the farm itself are dug-outs, into which we have to get if the Germans start shelling us. This farm has no comforts except what we bring, and our room is a shed 12 by 20 feet, with straw at one end, and a table at the other, and no door. The men sleep in barns on either side, and all day we keep busy on little jobs, such as draining the field at the back, cleaning the well, and improving the dug-outs. A little work goes a long way in this heat. We live here in extraordinary security and comfort, and the men are cheerful. At night we sleep with our rifles beside us, and our boots on, ready to dash up to the first trench that is attacked.”

When in “rest” they lived at “Aldershot Camp.”

“We are now at our rest camp, and our hut this morning is a perfect Pandemonium. We have six officers (including myself) who all get up at different times—for the very good reason that all could not get up together—and all call for bacon and hot tea, and, when they cannot get it, turn and blackguard the six orderlies. Also the fire smokes, and it is windy, and the shaving water is cold. But these little troubles pass in a whiff, and, when everyone has read his newspaper and shaved and ate (*sic*), we shall have the place cleared up, and sit down to cards and reading.”

During the “rest” there was not much to do in the way of amusement except short walks, games of football, and a very occasional trip to BAILLEUL.

The country was quietly undulating, and the hedgerows were full of cowslips and daffodils, and the fields were covered with daisies, with the larks singing overhead. They were also full, from one side to the other, of “Jack Johnson” holes, and old trenches, and old barbed wire entanglements.

Here is an account of one of those occasional visits to BAILLEUL by a party of officers.

“We have just been a party into BAILLEUL, and had quite an amusing time. First a long walk through fields of wheat, and then a visit to the Lunatic Asylum—a most enormous place—for a bath. We found it was the wrong day, and had to persuade Monsieur le Directeur, like this. ‘Je veux vous persuader, Monsieur, je ne veux pas faire des menaces, mais nous sommes quatre, et nous avons des revolvers.’ Talking like this, we got our own way, and were conducted through miles of corridor to a most beautiful bathroom, with hot and cold water and sponges and 20 baths, and there we disported ourselves for an hour. I never saw such a Lunatic Asylum for grandeur, but lacking, I fancy, that feeling of camaraderie that you find in smaller private asylums.

“However, after baths, we made some purchases, and then got tea at the Café des Alliés, eating any amount of little cakes. Then we walked back, and here we are.”

On another occasion there was a visit to ARMENTIÈRES, which was the Metropolis of ambition. "Yesterday I had a very jolly ride to ARMENTIÈRES. The afternoon was lovely, and all along the big road there is an avenue of gigantic poplars that give delightful shade, and on either side of the 'pavé' is a sort of 'Rotten Row' that you can canter on. At one place we passed a Battalion of Regulars, looking splendid and brown and hard.

"Also we passed endless transports treking slowly through the fleckered shadows of the poplars. However, these thoughts were interrupted by my horse nearly coming down on the pavement of ARMENTIÈRES, which was like ice.

"We put up our horses with the cook of the Military Police, and told him not to turn them into sausages before we came back.

"Then we went to the pâtisserie, and had two teas and 'petits gâteaux' and lemon ices, just like girls out for an afternoon. Then we went to the Cinema, but there was no show, so we did some shopping, and had an omelette, wine, and coffee at the 'Boeuf.' Afterwards we rode home in the cool of the evening."

On the 22nd June the Battalion left these trenches for the last time. They had been there for three months, and, as one of the men wrote, "They had made them like palaces and very safe."

On getting out of the trenches they were inspected by the II<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps Commander, Sir Charles Ferguson. He told them how excellently they had done, and that being the first Territorial Division to have a part of the Line to hold on their own, the whole Army had been watching them. That their trenches had been a model of what trenches ought to be, and that all Units, who were sent to his Corps for instruction, were sent to their Division.

On the 25th June, the Battalion marched to OUDERDOM, to join the Vth Army Corps, which was commanded by General Allenby.

The other two Divisions in the Corps were the Old Army Third Division, and the New Army, 14th Light Division, so that in this Corps were represented the Old Army, the New Army, and the Territorials. The Corps was holding the Line in the neighbourhood of HOOGE, in the YPRES Salient, which had been the recent scene of such furious fighting. The 5th North remained with this Corps until the end of September, when they went South to make their attack on the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT.

The first tour, after a few days' rest, was on the 5th July in SANCTUARY WOOD, one of the worst spots in the terrible YPRES Salient, where they were from July 5th to July 12th. Private G. W. S. Sherratt, of "A" Company, thus describes the tour:—

"Well, we are in a very hot place now, the hottest on the Line, I suppose. It is fighting up here, and our other place was quite a holiday compared with this. The shells are terrible, and I never knew anything could be so awful.

The trenches are very narrow and deep: no protection against shell-fire, no dug-outs to sleep in or get out of the rain, and the Germans are about 300 yards away. I don't like this wood fighting, and it is all patrolling in front of the trenches; we captured one German sniper. Of course in this wood they shell us night and day.

" Luckily only about seven chaps have been hit by the shells, all wounded. Our Company have only had two hit, but I am sorry to say both were killed at once—both being hit by bullets.

" Yesterday all our guns had half-an-hour's bombardment on the Germans, and there was not half a row. Luckily for us the wind is in our favour, or we should expect gas here. The shells come through our wood, and snap up a tree like breaking a match, and then they shake the ground for hundreds of yards. It is a pine wood, and we have gathered the fir branches, which make a fine soft bed. We ought to be healthy, and we are very brown, nearly black.

" The German sniper we captured was 16 years old. He was very glad that GERMANY had taken LONDON, and that ITALY was fighting for them."

Another man thus describes SANCTUARY WOOD:—" The Canadians held these lines before us, and had been gassed there. Even the flies on the dug-out walls are dead. The trenches are situated in a huge wood, and it is a very queer position. Between us and the Huns there is nothing but bracken, and we have to keep a very sharp look-out at night, for fear that bombing-parties may creep up to our trenches."

The Battalion left SANCTUARY WOOD on July 12th, and, after a few days' rest, on July 18th occupied a line of dug-outs behind HILL 60, with two platoons holding a fort. On the 22nd July they occupied the trenches on HILL 60, which were numbered 37, 38, 39 and 40. They had only just arrived when at 11-50 p.m., a mine exploded, and on the next day, July 23rd, there were four more explosions, which luckily did little damage.

HILL 60 is a low ridge about 50 feet high, and 250 yards from end to end, in the ZILLEBEKE region to the South-East of YPRES. It was of considerable strategic importance, as it afforded observation over the Salient. It had been originally held by the Germans. On April 17th it had been captured by the 13th Brigade, and had been retaken, and taken back by us the following day. The Germans attacked again; but, after most desperate fighting on the afternoon of the 21st, the fire died gradually away, and the assaults came to an end. There had been much subsequent fighting, and part of the hill had been again recovered by the Germans.

Private Sherratt gives an excellent description of these trenches and some of the fighting:—

" *31st July, 1915.*—When we got to the trenches only two Companies went in, and two stayed out in the support trench.

" We went in support, and this is a terrible job; it takes a man to look after a man here, and for every man in the trench one has to be in supports.



CAPT. J. BLOWER.



CAPT. A. G. S. M. BROOKSBANK, M.C.



CAPT. D. BURRELL.



CAPT. F. E. BURT, O. de C., C. de G.



CAPT. A. J. CAMPBELL.



CAPT. E. CARHART, M.C.



CAPT. A. H. CHARLTON, D.S.O.,  
M.C., C. de G.



CAPT. H. E. CHERRY.

PLATE VI.



CAPT. L. CLIVE.



CAPT. J. W. COOK.



CAPT. A. COTTERILL.



CAPT. A. R. COTTON.



CAPT. W. L. COULTON.



CAPT. W. E. COWLISHAW, M.C.



CAPT. H. R. CULLWICK.



CAPT. H. W. DARLING.



In supports we have to work like blacks, more than men can stand for long. Men are buried all round, as many as 35 in one grave.

"The Germans shell us pretty badly, but we are fairly safe if we keep in dug-outs. In one of our support places an aeroplane came over and dropped a signal; a shell came over at once and blew two chaps to pieces. So far our Battalion has had four killed during the last few days.

"We are now close to the big guns, and the row is terrible, and we cannot get any sleep for the continual roar of the guns. The Germans are using liquid fire and vitriol, and the night before last our chaps had to run for it.

"One time they shelled us for seven hours without a stop.

"We were huddled up at the back of our dug-out, not knowing when one was coming in through the roof. Fortunately only four chaps were hurt, but it is not a very nice feeling wondering what it will feel like to have a shell burst on top of you."

The writer in the above account mentions a liquid fire attack:—"This attack was made on the 14th Division, part of the same Army Corps who were holding the trenches to the left of the 46th. At 3-20 in the morning of July 30th a mine exploded under the British parapet, and a moment afterwards huge jets of flame, sprayed from their diabolical machines, rose suddenly from the line of German trenches, and fell in a sheet of fire into the front British position. The distance was only 20 yards, and only one man is known to have escaped from this section of trench.

"The attack was then developed, and, though at first successful, was finally repulsed. The Battalion, which was out at rest, took no part in the battle, though they had to 'stand-to,' and slept out for the night in the open."

The same writer again describes the trenches on August 4th:—"I am in a dug-out trying to write this—the size of it is 4 feet long by 3 feet wide. One chap cannot lie in it, so you can tell how cramped we are. How we sleep I don't know, our knees touch our chins. Yesterday they bombarded our trench with those 'Whizz Bangs,' and wounded Lieut. K. Aynsley and four other men in our Company. These 'Whizz Bang' things are awful; there is no report from the gun, and you don't hear it come, only a bang, a ball of fire, and then it simply rains pieces of iron and bullets.

"Yesterday, while we were in our hut, we could feel the force of the explosion in our faces. A piece hit my boot, but it hit the thick part of the sole, so did no damage.

"This morning I had a near shave, the closest I have been to a bursting shell. I was on Sentry, and heard one coming, and ran down the trench, out of the way, as I thought, and ran into it; fortunately it hit the parapet, and burst there, covering us with dirt.

"Nearly everybody is complaining of nerves—a lot are being sent to hospital.

"*9th August.*—An attack was made here last night. Our chaps attacked just on our left. Our guns were magnificent, absolutely marvellous.

"*25th August.*—We get about 6 or 8 days in the actual firing-trench, and then 5 or 6 in dug-outs a few hundred yards behind, doing the work of store and ration-carrying and trench digging.

"The last time we went into the fire trench we had an exciting time. I think I told you about those places where the Germans are only 5 or 6 yards away. We are in the same trench as they are, with only a barrier between us. I was in this part this time, on guard on the barrier.

"We have two men always with levelled bayonets ready to stab at the first sign of a man's head coming over; behind the bayonet men stands a bomb-thrower, with a bomb always in his hand ready to throw. The work is very nerve trying. You do one hour on and one off, so no chance to sleep. We did this for three days, and were done up, when we were put back in the trench.

"It seems so strange to be so near, as you can hear heaps of things, and would soon pick up the German language on that post. In the mornings you can smell their breakfast being cooked.

"*20th September.*—Two days before coming out of the trenches, on September 17th, the Germans suddenly opened a tremendous fire of huge shells. They sent over 100 in the first seven minutes, and 470 in forty minutes. We were in a fairly safe place, and did not suffer much, but where they got the full force of it they suffered terribly, and heaps of chaps were buried, and not all got out alive, and of course lots were wounded. The trenches were smashed up. You could not tell where they had been in some places. Broken rifles and equipment were everywhere, and I have never seen such a terrible mess. A notice has been read from the General to-day complimenting us upon our bravery, and the fine way in which we stuck to our trenches during a most terrible and trying time. Of course we lost a lot of very good men, and our casualty list this time nearly reaches 100. Our Sergeant-Major was wounded, and he is a chap we cannot replace.

"Although I am one of them, and I ought not to say it, the 5th have proved themselves to be equal to any British troops ever sent out, and everybody seems to be talking about the way we stuck to our trenches.

"If we could have seen a dozen dead Germans we should have felt a bit revenged for our boys. I should think we shall get a mention in despatches. Anyway I am proud of the 5th, and proud to belong to it."

Another man gives the following description of the bombardment of the 17th September:—

"This day we had the heaviest bombardment we have ever had. It was a terrible time. They commenced to shell at 7-30 p.m., and kept it up until 9 p.m. Our Brigadier said that no less than 500 shells were concentrated on the two trenches, numbers 38 and 39. We had about 20 casualties. It was so terrific that the 6th North Staffs. wanted to come and relieve us, but Colonel

Knight would not hear of it. We quite thought they were going to attack, and all preparations were made. Bayonets were fixed, bombs taken into the front Line, and every man was ready to meet them.

"After the first half-hour's bombardment everybody was quite cool, laughing and passing a few jokes as to what they would do if the Boche did come over. Everybody was sorry they did not come. They would have had a fine reception. The Potters' blood was up."

On July 25th the men saw for the first time an air-fight. One of the German aeroplanes was flying very high behind the lines over Maple Copse, when all at once one of the British Scouts dived out of the clouds and attacked the German 'plane.

Machine-gun fire could be heard, and the German 'plane broke into flames, and drove towards the earth.

When it had come down some distance, the wings of the 'plane burned away and came down very gently. There was tremendous cheering and everybody was very excited.

On July 24th Lieut. A. F. Wedgwood was out with the Colonel inspecting a mine crater by night. In order to see the crater he fired a star-light pistol, and in doing so was shot through the wrist by a bullet. The wound was not serious, but he was sent back to England, and did not rejoin the Battalion until the end of 1916.

This officer, on another occasion, was out on night work with a party of men, when a German machine-gun began firing; to distract the enemy's fire he walked along the front some distance and rattled the barbed wire with his stick.

A *Daily Mail* correspondent happened to visit the trenches at HILL 60 when the 5th North Staffords were holding the Line, and gave the following description of the place:—

"The Hill, which is of low elevation, rising only some 30 or 40 feet above the surrounding country, is really nothing but a rising knoll of ground that forms the end of the KLEIN-ZILLEBEKE ridge. The German trenches run in a double tier along the crest and upper slope, while our trenches form an irregular line along the edge of the lower slope. The enemy is at the top of the Hill, and we are a little way up the side of it. The whole face of the Hill presents a picture of the wildest confusion. Everywhere are huge craters, results of mines exploded on the night of the British attack, torn and gaping sandbags are scattered in profusion, broken rifles, British and German, odds and ends of equipment of all kinds, smashed barbed wire, and a mass of other débris, lie in bewildering variety, down the hill-side, the whole half-hidden in the long grass, that has sprung up between the trenches. The latter twist and wind in an extraordinary way.

"At one spot I reached a spot but six yards from the enemy, and down this two barricades have been erected, one on our side, and one on the German



side. Between the two stretches a short patch of ground shut in on either side by the crumbling walls of the old trench.

"The HILL 60 trenches are full of interest, but for obvious reasons no precise details can be given.

"At one spot a Railway Bridge spans our position, and in the cutting beneath a large pool of stagnant water has collected.

"Beyond stretches the Railway-line, the rails torn and twisted, and partly covered with weeds grown between the sleepers.

"The line is under direct fire from the enemy, and to cross it in the open is to court certain death from the snipers in the enemy's trench, but a short 40 yards away.

"In the pool below the bridge are a number of ghastly relics, the exact nature of which is best left to the imagination. It is enough to say that dead men have been lying there for some months, and no man dare approach to bring them out for burying. It was a pouring afternoon when we went round, and the trenches were wet and slippery.

"The floor was covered with a thick layer of rich brown mud. The men sought cover as best they could, some huddled under rainproof sheets, and others crouched in dug-outs.

"Despite the weather the men were cheerful, and made little jokes among themselves."

Whilst in the neighbourhood of HILL 60 Communion Services were held. The "Church" was made by sandbagging one end of an old Railway arch to stop the bullets coming in, and newspapers were fastened up to make an Altar. Some leaves were taken off the trees close by, and served the purpose of "Altar flowers."

When in Reserve in the Railway dug-outs the men used to bathe in a small lake. One one occasion, September 10th, which was a very warm day, some of the men were having a swim when the German guns began to fire, and pieces of shell began to drop into the water. The men quickly swam ashore, picked up their clothes, and, without drying or dressing, ran to the dug-outs. After that there was not much more bathing in that lake.

While the Battalion was in these trenches the casualties continued to increase.

On August 13th Lieut. R. G. F. GOSS was killed, and by the end of September the total casualties, since coming to FRANCE, were nearly 250, of whom over 60 had been killed or had died of wounds.

On September 25th the Battle of LOOS commenced, and on October 1st the 5th North Staffords left HILL 60.



CAPT. G. R. DEWSNAP.



CAPT. P. F. ELLIS.



CAPT. J. H. FLEMING.



CAPT. G. H. FLETCHER.



CAPT. H. D. GIBSON, M.C.



CAPT. C. R. GOSS.



CAPT. V. E. GREEN, M.C., C. de G.



CAPT. H. GREGORY.

PLATE VIII.



CAPT. L. C. GRICE, M.C.



CAPT. F. M. GROSE.



CAPT. G. F. HARRIS.



CAPT. N. H. HILL.



CAPT. J. HODGKINSON.



CAPT. A. L. JOHNSON.



CAPT. R. T. JOHNSON.



CAPT. C. R. KEARY.

## CHAPTER III.

THE 1st/5th IN THE ATTACK ON THE HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT,  
OCTOBER 13th, 1915.

UP to this time the Battalion had not taken any part in a big battle, though they had done their full share of trench work, and suffered considerable casualties.

Before describing the attack on the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT it is necessary to say a few words about the general situation at the time.

Since the beginning of 1915 the prospects of the Allies had not improved. On the Eastern Front the Russians had been driven back beyond WARSAW, and, though not broken, they seemed to be in a very serious situation.

On the West the fighting had been mostly defensive on both sides, the Germans having devoted their chief efforts to beating the Russians, whilst the Allies could not do much on account of their lack of munitions.

Furthermore, the British Army had been waiting for the training of the New Army to be complete, before undertaking a great offensive.

As the Summer advanced the increase in munitions and men, and the desire of helping the Russians, made some sort of offensive desirable, and on September 25th there was a joint attack by the French and the British.

The Line held by the Germans ran nearly due South from the coast to the river OISE at NOYON, and then turned East to VERDUN, forming two sides of a square. It was decided to make simultaneous attacks on the two sides, the French attacking in CHAMPAGNE, between RHEIMS and VERDUN, and the British attacking at LOOS, between LA BASSÉE and ARRAS.

Both these attacks commenced on the 25th of September, and both had at first considerable success, but both failed to break the German Line.

We are not concerned with the French attack, but the 5th North Staffs. were to take a tragic share in the final act of the British attack. The attack was aimed at the trenches between the LA BASSÉE Canal and the slopes in front of GRENAY, near the town of LENS.

At the Northern end of these trenches were two most important positions, which were called Fosse No. 8, and the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT. Fosse No. 8, which lay about half a mile inside the German Line, was a great slag heap like one of those so familiar to people in the POTTERIES, and commanded all the country to the South. The HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT lay to the South, being pushed out about 500 yards in front of the Line, and was connected with the main front by two trenches, "Little Willie" on the North, and "Big Willie" on the South.

It was situated on a gentle rise with a clear field of fire before it. It was cut up by various trenches, and each trench contained numerous machine-gun emplacements.





On the first day of the attack, the 25th, the British had several successes. They captured LOOS, in the Southern sector, and in the Northern sector the 9th Division, composed of Scottish Battalions, captured Fosse 8 and the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT.

To capture and to hold are not the same thing, however, and gradually Fosse 8 was recaptured, as well as part of the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT.

The HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT now became the goal of each side, and was the scene of very heavy fighting, as it was held by both opponents.

On October 4th and 5th the 28th Division was relieved by the Guards' Division, who withstood successfully a violent German counter-attack on October 8th, which was intended to drive them out of the Redoubt.

It can be seen from the above that both sides were willing to make great sacrifices in order to have the Redoubt, and the British Command decided to make one final effort.

The 46th Division was chosen for this most difficult piece of work, and it certainly would not have been imposed on any troops, unless their previous record had proved that they were suited for this task.

When the British attack was launched at LOOS, the 46th Division was holding the South-East corner of the YPRES salient, the 5th North Staffs. being at HILL 60.

On October 1st the Battalion was relieved, and during their last tour received as a send-off the explosion of several mines, which luckily did not do much damage, although there were several casualties.

On October 3rd the Battalion entrained at ABEELE, and was bidden farewell by General Allenby, who was at that time commanding the Vth Army Corps.

It was dark when they detrained at FOUQUEREUIL, and they had a long tiring march the same evening to the outskirts of ROBEQ.

Having spent two days there, on October 6th they marched to DROUVIN, a village a few kilometres from BETHUNE.

It was here that the officers were informed that they were to attack the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT and Fosse 8 on October 12th, the date being subsequently altered to the 13th.

On the 10th of October four officers from each Battalion of the Stafford Brigade went up by 'bus to VERMELLES to reconnoitre.

The 5th North party consisted of Colonel Knight, Major Barke, Captain Ridgway, and Captain Worthington. They found the Guards holding the trenches, and spent a few hours studying their own trenches and viewing their objectives. This was no easy matter, as the trenches had been considerably damaged, and there was continuous bombing in the disputed portions of "Big Willie."

During this visit one of the party, Colonel Waterhouse, who was in Command of the 6th S. Staffs., was severely wounded by a fragment of one

of the British shells; and on the return journey down "HULLUCH Alley," one of the long communication trenches, they were subject to a bombardment, but fortunately without further mishap.

On the following day another party went up for the same purpose.

On the same day the operation orders were received, and on the 12th there was a meeting of officers to receive their instructions.

The following is a list of the officers who took part in the attack:—

*Headquarters.*—Colonel Knight, Major Barke, Captain Fleming (Adjutant), Captain Wenger (Signal Officer), Lieut. Boddington (M.G. Officer), Lieut. A. L. Johnson (Bombing Officer).

"A" *Company.*—Captain Worthington, Lieuts. Campbell, Noke, Lowndes, and Dunn.

"B" *Company.*—Captain R. T. Johnson, Captain Wood, Lieuts. Mayer, Clive, and Hinchliffe.

"C" *Company.*—Captain Keary, Lieuts. Davies, Bishop, and Holtom.

"D" *Company.*—Captain Ridgway, Lieuts. Beswick, Mellor, and Fletcher.

The men on one of the previous days had been to see a model of the trenches. One of the men gave the following summary of Colonel Knight's speech:—

"That chimney over there represents VERMELLES, our starting point. The green lines are British, and the white German trenches. We shall start here, and we have got to take this trench, this slag heap, and this village, an advance of 1,000 yards."

The men "thought this rather sudden, but laughed as though it were a good joke."

At three p.m., on October 12th, the Battalion marched from DROUVIN to their rendezvous at VERMELLES.

The day was glorious, and as they marched towards the firing line the only signs of War were the booming of the guns and the buzzing of the aeroplanes. At 3-15 the Colonel's whistle gave the sign for the advance, and they started for their great enterprise.

To read the men's letters gives an idea of their splendid spirits. They sang "Bonnie Scotland," and "Tommy Atkins," and other favourite marching songs; they passed collieries and villages, where the peasants wished them "Bon soir."

After a march of about six miles they halted, and had "tea" of bread and cheese.

When they continued their march the roar of the guns became more distinct, and, as it grew dark, they could see the lights ascending and descending over the firing line. After another half-hour's march, at 8 p.m., they arrived at VERMELLES, which was badly devastated by fire, and after another short rest they tramped on a mile further to the communication trenches.





No. II. LENS—LA BASSEE DISTRICT.

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The journey to the front Line through the trenches was very slow. The trenches were narrow, and cut through white chalky subsoil. There were continuous checks, some for a few minutes, some for an hour, and it was not until the morning of October 13th that the whole Battalion was in position.

The Battalion was assembled in a portion of the British front Line to the left of HULLUCH Avenue, "A" and "C" Companies being on the right, and "B" and "D" on the left.

The men were very closely packed, and it was difficult to move along to the trenches. There were no dug-outs, and Headquarters were established in one of the bays in the trenches.

Then came breakfast, consisting of tinned meat and vegetables.

The task of the Division was the capture of the Redoubt, and the ground behind it, especially the Commanding Dump or Slag-heap, called Fosse 8, and the miners' houses. In fact it was to capture the Pit. The attack was to be made with two Brigades, the 138th, with the Leicesters and Lincolns, on the left; and the 137th, Staffords, on the right; whilst the 139th, Sherwood Brigade, was in reserve.

It had been intended to launch the right attack from the forward British Line, but the loss of a considerable portion of "Big Willie" during the German attack on the 8th of October had caused a change of plan, and it was decided to make the attack from the Old British Line of September, between HULLUCH Alley and the Central BOYAU, though a portion of the 5th South Staffs. were placed in the forward line East of "Big Willie," with orders to join the others when they came into the same line.

It was also intended to make a gas attack, and the preparations for this had made it impossible to bring up the Division earlier, on account of the traffic in the communication trenches. The attack, which was to take place at 2 p.m., was to be preceded by a two hours' bombardment, and an hour of gas and smoke.

The Stafford Brigade were to wait five minutes more until 2-5 p.m., to allow the other Brigade, the 138th, on their left, time to make itself felt and engage the enemy's attention.

The 138th Brigade was to attack the front of the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT, whilst the 137th was to attack "Big Willie" from its junction with the Redoubt, and also the trenches to the right. The 5th N. Staffs., supported by the 6th N. Staffs., were on the left, and the 5th S. Staffs., supported by the 6th S. Staffs., were on the right.

During the short occupation of the German Lines by the British a communication trench had been dug to "Big Willie," and this, as the result will show, saved the lives of many of the 5th N. Staffs.

The bombardment began at 12 noon, and, though to the onlookers it seemed heavy, it was not effective.



CAPT. J. KEELING.



CAPT. G. LEMON.



CAPT. G. R. LIPP, M.B., M.C.



CAPT. T. LOCKETT.



CAPT. W. H. P. LONEY.



CAPT. H. E. MACGOWAN.



CAPT. I. J. H. MALONE, M.C.



CAPT. C. J. B. MASEFIELD, M.C.



CAPT. F. E. MASON.



CAPT. O. H. MASON, M.C.



CAPT. H. L. MEAD, D.C.M.,  
M.M. (French).



CAPT. J. L. MEAKIN.



CAPT. A. U. MILLAR, M.C.



CAPT. G. MOUNTFORD.



CAPT. J. MURPHY.



CAPT. F. J. NEWTON, M.C.,  
M.M. (French).

There was considerable enemy sniping during the whole of the bombardment, and also bursts of machine-gun fire.

This bombardment continued until 1 p.m., when the guns lifted from the Front Line, and clouds of gas and smoke were sent over at intervals until 2 p.m.

At 1-45, Colonel Knight and his Adjutant, Captain Fleming, passed along, encouraging the men. The Battalion was to attack in two lines. "A" and "B" Companies were to form the first line, and "C" and "D" the second line, and there was also a special bombing party. At 2 p.m. "A" and "B" Companies left the trenches, and lay down in front of their own wire, without many casualties, and waited five minutes.

Captain Worthington was in charge of "A" Company, and Captain R. T. Johnson of "B" Company. At 2-5 p.m. the two Company Commanders jumped up, and waved their canes, and the whole line rose and commenced a steady advance. They were met by a hail of bullets, and men fell fast, but they kept on.

Captain Worthington was struck by a bullet on the side of his thigh, and fell down, but was up again immediately, and went on, only to find that he had no more than four or five men near him. They struck a trench running diagonally, which they crossed, and then lay down on the other side of it.

Then, as there was no-one else to be seen, they made a rush and jumped down into the trench. This trench proved to be the communication trench mentioned above, and there they found some more North and South Staffs. soldiers.

The second line, "C" and "D" Companies, commanded by Captains Keary and Ridgway, shared the fate of the first line; and the few of them, who came through the fire, joined the other Companies in this communication trench. Higher up this trench, where it joined "Big Willie," there was a fierce bombing fight, which made some progress, until the supply of bombs ran short.

The 6th North Staffs. in support, as soon as they left the trenches at 2-10 p.m., fared much the same as the 5th North Staffs., and only reached the front Line trench. The machine-gun fire was such that it was impossible to advance across the open.

The two Battalions of the S. Staffs. on the right had very similar experiences, and made no effective advance, and, although the 138th Brigade had rather better fortune than the 137th, they were only able to improve their position slightly after heavy casualties.

Meanwhile, the 5th N. Staffs., who had reached the old communication trench, seeing that no further progress was to be made, had organised their position. Major Barke was the senior surviving officer, and took charge. The fighting had practically ceased at 4 p.m.

As soon as it was dark some of the wounded managed to get into the trenches, which became almost impassable. The stretcher-bearers were occupied in searching for the badly wounded in the open, and there were no means of

carrying out those in the trenches. Added to that there was a scarcity of water, and, when it arrived in petrol tins, it was almost undrinkable on account of the taste of petrol.

During the night Captain Wood, who had lain out in a shell-hole until dark, came in, and also several more unwounded men.

A German counter-attack was expected, and preparations were made, but the night passed quietly.

At daylight, on October 14th, the Brigadier-General Feetham, came round and told them that they would be relieved that night, and, as nothing of special importance happened, just before midnight the remnant of the Battalion (five officers and less than 200 men), was relieved by the Guards, who could not refrain from cheering as the gallant heroes marched out. They hastened away, receiving a parting salvo from the enemy field guns, but reached VERMELLES without further casualties.

There are many accounts of the battle by individuals, and extracts from a few of these will help to fill up the picture.

One man, Joseph Barlow, had joined the Battalion at DROUVIN, one of a draft of 50 men, and the attack was his first experience of warfare. After describing the terrific bombardment, he says:—

“But would you believe it, about five minutes before we charged, they opened up a murderous machine-gun fire, simply sweeping our parapets? It was a mystery to us, but still we knew we had to face it in a few minutes. Just then the officers sent the word along that we must buck up, and that they were proud of us, and bid us a last farewell. We raised a cheer, and sent word back that we were proud of them, and trusted them, and would follow them anywhere. Watches were out. Two o'clock—five more minutes to go. Our sleepiness began to shake off. We felt at our bayonets, and put our smoke helmets on. Four minutes to go—three—two—‘God help us’—one; ‘Up, lads, and at ‘em!’

“Up we scrambled, bullets whistling past our ears like hailstones. Off we started. The lad on my left dropped all in a heap, without a murmur. About five more paces, the lad on my right dropped. Then they dropped all round me in twos and threes. I wondered when my turn would come, and what it would feel like when it did come. I had not long to wait. I had gone about 50 yards when bang; crack! Got it in the leg.

“Just throwing my arms up in the air—bang! copped it again in the right upper arm! Down I go. Now, let me tell you, I was not excited a bit—just normal. Well, that was about seven minutes past two. There I lay flat, face downwards, wondering what would happen next. A few yards away lay seven or eight pals, some dead, some dying, some gone delirious.”

He lay there until 6 p.m., when he managed to crawl in, and, reaching a trench, managed to hobble to a dressing-station, and eventually arrived safely in ENGLAND.



Other men describe the fighting in similar terms, and give various details. They went to the attack with the cry of "Potters for ever!"—"Our Colonel went over with his stick in his hand as if he was going on parade."—"They were met by a hail of bullets and mown down."—"Our Captain was hit, then the Sergeant-Major"—"they were wounded and crawled in at dark"—"they reached the trenches where they found their pals."

There is no word of faltering or retreat, but just onward, as they had been ordered, waiting for the only end, a bullet or a shell.

The *Staffordshire Sentinel* gave a most vivid description of the fight soon after the event:—

"With the battle-cry of 'Potters for ever!' and 'Now, the Potters!' the advance started. With an amazing sang-froid they pushed ahead under the Colonel's leadership. With grim intent they pressed on. Men were continually falling. Before they had gone far a merciless and murderous machine-gun fire started.

"From right and left there was a leaden hail from the quick firers, from the front there was a persistent and steady fusillade of bullets and shells. From every point there was fire.

"Men were falling in scores, and the destruction became heavier as they advanced. Men dropped, and mingled with the bodies of Scottish soldiers, who had been killed in the previous attacks.

"Even the fallen had their encouraging word to shout, 'Carry on, boys, I've got one.'—'Good luck! I'm done.'

"Their spirit was indomitable. The thin khaki line became terribly attenuated, and by the time they were approaching their objective they had lost the Colonel and most of their officers. Men struggled on, but they were not sufficient to complete their mission, and they dropped into an empty trench.

"How even this small body came through the devastating fire is a miracle to them. There is not a single man but can tell of hair-breadth escapes. Bullet-torn clothes and equipment were the experiences of everyone.

"Meanwhile tragedy stalked through 'No Man's Land,' over which the Battalion had passed.

"Beyond the trenches is dead ground, churned up earth of shell-holes and mine-craters, where life cannot exist. Bullets and shells came over unceasingly, and men who in their agony raised themselves even the slightest were stricken again.

"There is no more noble epic of self-sacrifice than Lieut. MAYER'S heroic death. He was shot in the leg and fell, but the cries of a wounded man for water came to him. He crawled to the wounded man to give him a drink from his water-bottle. As he raised the man's head in his arm he was struck again by a bullet in the head, and killed instantly. Later he was found, his out-stretched arm still holding the water-bottle.

"Another man's unselfish devotion to his officer should be recorded. Captain RIDGWAY fell grievously wounded, and he lay in the open exposed to the bullets, and unable to help himself. His orderly, Pte. 'Billy' Fielding, never left him. Facing, without heed of his own safety, the danger of exposing himself, he dug his Captain in, and made him comparatively safe. He then brought his Captain a drink, and then went and fetched a stretcher-bearer. Captain Ridgway was brought in, but died of his wounds.

"Deeds of bravery and heroism were done in a hundred places, and there were many thrilling escapes.

"Captain Wenger found half-a-dozen bullet holes through his mackintosh, which was slung on his back, and two through his trousers. Captain Worthington had a Bible in his breast pocket, and in the enfilade fire a bullet went through it lengthwise without touching him. One man had his cap and boot-heel blown off, and near him was another man saved by the wire ring in his cap."

There have been many such advances during the War, where the attack has had no chance.

The men of North Staffordshire showed that they could "do and die" like others, as their casualties proved.

As given by the Divisional Report, these comprised 19 officers and 488 men.

Colonel J. H. KNIGHT was killed, though there was a mystery as to how he died. There were also killed the Adjutant, Captain J. H. FLEMING; Captain H. A. RIDGWAY, Commanding "D" Company; Captain R. T. JOHNSON, Commanding "B" Company; and Lieuts. O. W. BODDINGTON, Nigel BISHOP, C. A. LOWNDES, H. R. G. DAVIES, P. MELLOR and F. B. MAYER; and nine other officers were wounded.

Over 700 men and officers went in to the attack, and over 500 were killed or wounded. These figures alone will show that the 5th N. Staffs. had not faltered, and that they had gone on until they dropped.

Those who saw the advance have expressed their admiration. Men of the Guards were full of approval, and War Correspondents have stated that "the advance was magnificent." Major-General Stuart-Wortley, N. Midland Divisional Commander, said that "the Division had behaved with distinguished gallantry, worthy of the best traditions of the British Army."

There has been much criticism on this attack. It is known now that the bombardment had been ineffective, and that the Germans were ready with their machine-guns to sweep the line of advance. The gas attack, too, had failed, and no troops could have succeeded in the task.

But there has never been a word of criticism of the behaviour of the officers and men. That was simply sublime.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE 1st/5th, FROM THE HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT, OCTOBER 13th, 1915,  
TO THE RETURN FROM EGYPT, FEBRUARY 14th, 1916.

THE terrible losses of October 13th, 1915, cast a sad gloom over North Staffordshire, almost every district having suffered; and many of the fallen came from families known all over the POTTERIES for many generations.

Reinforcements had to be found, and luckily were available; and what was more they were officers and men in spirit akin to those who had gone, who had volunteered from the same district.

By this time the 2nd/5th North Staffs., who had sent out several drafts to the 1st/5th, had become a permanent Unit, so that drafts had to be supplied by the 3rd/5th.

The 3rd/5th North Staffs. had been formed and recruited at the end of March, 1915, by Colonel A. E. Blizzard, who had been a Major with the 5th North Staffs. at the beginning of the War. The men were obtained by means of recruiting marches, with speeches, and similar appeals. The Battalion kept increasing daily in numbers, and it became quite a usual sight to see the men, some in uniform, and some in mufti, training in HANLEY PARK. The headquarters were at first at SHELTON, but later on they were moved to the STOKE Drill Hall. The STOKE football ground was also used for training, and on Sundays the Battalion, after parading there, attended service at STOKE Parish Church. The majority of the men slept in billets near HANLEY PARK, and a regular occupation of the officers on Fridays was to go round and pay the landladies.

By this time some start had been made in the training of new officers; and soon after an officer had received his commission he was sent again to school. Many an officer, who had considered that his education was finished, found himself in the late thirties back at the desk, with terrible penalties, if he failed in his examinations. The men, too, who had obtained non-commission rank, were sent to school, or, as they were later called, courses, and by the end of the War there were very few who had not been on some course or other.

The work of the men was mostly confined to drill and route marches, and their only great adventure was the storming of the HANLEY PARK trenches during the fêtes. The trenches had been built after considerable fatigue by the men, and, on this special occasion, when the day happened to be wet, they were defended by one Company and stormed by two others. There was also a realistic imitation of a bombardment by means of fireworks, and an admiring crowd watched the display.

At the end of July, the Battalion marched, with a mid-day halt at DARLSTON HALL for lunch, from STOKE to STAFFORD, where the head-



quarters were in the Corporation Schools, and the training was carried on there as at STOKE. While at STAFFORD the 3rd/5th gave a grand military display in TRENTAM Gardens, on August 26th, at a Red Cross Fête. Regimental sports followed, after which Lady Harrowby distributed the prizes to the men. At the end of September they moved to BELTON PARK, near GRANTHAM. Here all the Third Line Units of the Division were assembled, and the men lived in huts. It was a great change, as until now the Battalion had been self-sufficing.

Whilst they were at BELTON PARK the news of the Battle of the 13th of October arrived, and it at once brought the War into the camp, so to speak. Nearly every Unit of the 46th Division had suffered heavily, and the losses had to be replaced from the men and officers at BELTON PARK. The 3rd/5th North Staffs. immediately prepared their first draft, and, as soon as possible, 18 officers and 250 men were sent to ROUEN to join the 1st/5th. From this time onwards, down to the end of the War, drafts kept going out. In the early days a dinner would be given to the men, and a present; the Colonel would say a few words, and there would be a farewell concert. Next morning, often before daylight, the draft fell in, and marched off, singing, to GRANTHAM station, where the Colonel would be again present to say "good-bye."

Another thing which brought the War home to the Battalion was the presence of the B.E.F. men, who had come home on account of sickness or wounds. One or two arrived at STOKE, but at BELTON PARK they were sufficient to form a Company, and were commanded by B.E.F. officers. They were objects of awe and admiration to the others, as men who had actually seen fighting. They remained in ENGLAND until they were fit, and then went out again with the other drafts. In this way a bond of union began to grow up between the 1st/5th and the 3rd/5th; and, later on, with the progress of events, the 2nd/5th and the 6th North Staffs. Battalions also joined, and all became one large and happy family, over which Colonel Blizzard presided, with fatherly kindness.

It is now necessary to return to the 5th North Staffs. in FRANCE. After being relieved by the Scots Guards the remainder of the Battalion was brought out of the Line, and moved back, on October 16th, to FOUQUIÈRES (South of BETHUNE). Here they were inspected by Sir Douglas Haig, who spoke to and questioned every man. They were delighted with him and his cheering words.

On October 19th they moved still further Westward to ALLOUAGNE. Here the new drafts began to arrive, the Battalion was re-formed, and Lieut-Col. Wm. Burnett, who had been a Major in the 5th S. Staffs., took over the Command. On October 28th they moved Eastwards to FOUQUEREUIL, where they were inspected by the King; and, a few days later, on November 14th, they were once more in the trenches in the sector of NEUVE CHAPELLE, North of LA BASSÉE, where they relieved the 4th Suffolks.

The Battle of LOOS had ended in the month of October, and, though there was continual scrapping, there was no more heavy fighting on the Western Front that year. The Germans were occupied in their preparations against SERBIA, and GREAT BRITAIN was troubled with the situation in the DARDANELLES.

The trenches at NEUVE CHAPELLE were in a bad condition, and the men who had just arrived had a trying time. It was very wet, and the water was up to the knees, and over the men's puttees, and the mud was so thick, that it was a most difficult matter getting about the trenches. The weather, too, was cold, and sheep-skin coats and anti-frost-bite fat were issued.

The life was that usual in the trenches. Parapets would collapse with the wet, or be broken down by shells, and would have to be repaired during the night. Casualties, too, were not infrequent. On November 17th a shell dropped into one of the dug-outs, and killed four men, and wounded seven others, and on the same night another shell fell into another dug-out, where four men were sitting round a fire. They were knocked all over the place, and the iron girders of the roof were smashed, as if they had been matchwood.

Pte. Sherratt again gives a vivid description of the life:—"Everything we have gets caked with mud. We brought our blankets up this time, and it is a nice mess now, blankets, overcoats, skin coats, and ourselves all wet and mixed up with mud. We get a 'don't care' spirit, and just suffer it all, with the mud thick to our waists and up to our elbows. Never mind, some day it will be all over, and we shall be proud and glad we have done what we have, and we shall call them good times, and wish we could have just one of the trench meals over again. No meal we could ever have is enjoyed so much as our trench breakfast, we look forward to it all night. We make a fire, and boil a mess tin of tea, and cook our rasher of bacon, and usually eat the whole of our bread ration; if we have any cheese we toast that in the bacon fat. It is generally mixed up pretty well with dirt, but we do enjoy it." Such was trench life, with long hours of drudgery and watching, but with a few pleasures, which shine out like the stars on a dark night.

The Battalion occupied these trenches until December 3rd, when they were suddenly withdrawn and marched to CALONNE-SUR-LA-LYS, a small village near MERVILLE, and afterwards, on December 19th, they arrived at MOLINGHEM, another village near the railway.

When a Battalion is withdrawn any considerable distance from the trenches, it either means a period of training for a big attack, or else a move to a new seat of War, and, as can be imagined, rumour was very busy as to what this withdrawal meant.

Meanwhile the people in North Staffordshire had not forgotten the need of a Christmas dinner for the lads at the Front, and, through the efforts of Mr. Gradwell Goodwin, the Mayor of NEWCASTLE, and Mr. H. S. Adams, a dinner had been provided, and sent out to FRANCE. The dinner was to

be given on Christmas Day at MOLINGHEM, but, orders having come through that the Battalion was to leave on that day, it was decided to have it on Christmas Eve. At 2 a.m., on the morning of the 24th, orders came through for a full pack parade for the General's inspection, and, as the cooks, too, had to parade, the Christmas dinner seemed hopeless. They were all ready for parade when the order was cancelled, and instead they all set to work for the Christmas dinner. The dinner was a great success, consisting of tinned turkey and tongue, and preserved vegetables, and no-one wanted any tea!

On Christmas Day they were fetched out at 4 a.m., had breakfast at 4-30, and paraded at 5-15. They marched a short distance to the station at BERGUETTE, and then had a busy time carrying huge boxes of stores, and loading up the big transport waggons. The train was drawn up in the siding, and consisted of the usual cattle-trucks, with the notices in French, stating that they would hold "Forty men or eight horses." The men were penned up in these trucks for two days, arriving at MARSEILLES at 2 a.m. on December 27th, actually being 52 hours in the train. Here is a description of the journey, by one of the men, written on Boxing Day.

"We keep on travelling; it is getting a bit monotonous, but the country is very beautiful. We have made our cattle-truck a bit comfortable. We managed to get two petrol cans, and one we knocked holes in and used for a fire, and the other we used to boil water in for tea. It gives you a better idea how big the world is when you can keep travelling day and night, and day and night again; and I don't know when we shall finish."

At MARSEILLES the Battalion had a grand reception, being pelted with cigarettes and flowers, and marched to a camp just outside the town overlooking the sea. The men were very happy at MARSEILLES, and especially enjoyed the warmth and sunshine, after the cold and wet of the trenches.

The same writer describes his sensations:—"It is delightful down here. You have not lived until you have visited this part of the world. To-day it is very hot, and we are getting quite sunburnt—fancy this in the middle of winter. The sea is delightful, and we are on a cliff overlooking the sea. I have never seen sea so blue; it is so clear you can see the bottom easily."

It was now known that the Battalion was going to the East. The reason of this move was the critical situation in the BALKANS and Near East. In October BULGARIA had declared War on SERBIA, and, as SERBIA was attacked on three sides, by the Germans, Austrians, and Bulgarians, after a heroic resistance she had been overwhelmed. The Allies had landed at SALONIKA to render what assistance they could. The position in GREECE, too, was critical. The Premier Venizelos wished to join the Allies, but he was not strong enough to resist the pro-German tendencies of the King of GREECE. In the DARDANELLES the British Expedition had failed, and there was considerable anxiety as to whether the Army could remain in the Peninsula. In Western EGYPT there had been fighting, and the Turks were threatening



CAPT. R. J. NORTHCOTE, C.F.



CAPT. W. R. OLLIS, M.C.



CAPT. G. H. PAGET.



CAPT. A. G. PAXTON, M.C.



CAPT. W. PENDLETON.



CAPT. F. T. PINFOLD.



CAPT. M. RADCLIFFE



CAPT. B. H. RAYNER.



CAPT. H. S. READ.



CAPT. H. A. RIDGWAY.



CAPT. G. H. RITTNER.



CAPT. A. T. SCRIVENER.



CAPT. W. W. SCRIVENER.



CAPT. M. SETTLE.



CAPT. V. B. SHELLEY.



CAPT. J. G. SHORTER.



the SUEZ CANAL. Finally, the position in MESOPOTAMIA was also full of difficulties. On the Western Front there was not likely to be much fighting during the winter, and so it had been decided to send reinforcements to the East. These were the circumstances which brought about the fact that the 5th N. Staffs., instead of shivering in the trenches, were basking in the sun of MARSEILLES on New Year's Day, 1916.

On January 5th the order came through for the Stafford Brigade to embark, and the Battalion embarked on the P. and O. Liner, *Beltana*. They marched down to the docks, headed by the brass band, and cheered by the population, and they sailed before daylight next morning.

Contrary to expectation the men found the quarters most comfortable. On getting on board they were told off to their tables in a huge mess, and at 6 p.m. had a dinner of Irish stew. The men were given hammocks to sleep in, and had to put them up themselves. This caused considerable amusement. "Chaps were swinging all ways, and getting tipped out" (to quote Pte. Sherratt again). "They are fine things to sleep in when you are in them, but it is getting in that is the trouble, and getting out again." The voyage was quite agreeable, although for the first few days many of the men were seasick. There were three or four parades a day, and boat drills, and the men had to wear lifebelts. On the morning of January 8th land was sighted, and it proved to be MALTA. The ship put into harbour, and anchored. "As we drew into the harbour small boats crowded round us. Each little boat had heaps of things to sell, and they were experts at throwing up lines with a basket attached. You put your money in the basket, and send what you want, and lower the basket, and they put in what you want. Then there come the boys who will dive down for silver coins; how they do it I don't know, but they never miss the coin, and bring it up between their toes. We were hoping to get a few hours' leave ashore, but it seems impossible now. We enjoyed the evening very much, sitting on deck, and watching the lights on the shore. Two French battleships lying close to us were showing cinema pictures on deck; we could see them from our ship."

MALTA was left about 8 a.m. next morning, January 9th. As they steamed out of the harbour, they all stood on deck and watched the land receding out of sight. The weather was calm, and they had a most pleasant day. There were no lights at night on account of the danger from submarines.

On the afternoon of the 10th they had quite an exciting time. A ship was sighted on the port side, and then two more, and then six. The ship's bell was rung, and every man had to take up his station near his boat. Nothing further happened, however, and soon afterwards matters went on in their ordinary course.

On the 12th the ship arrived safely at ALEXANDRIA, the voyage having taken exactly six days. The Battalion did not stop long in ALEXANDRIA, but was immediately taken by train to the North side of the SUEZ CANAL, and

encamped on January 13th at a place called SHALUFA. It here formed a part of the Egyptian Defence Army. Only half the Division had come to EGYPT, namely, the 137th (Stafford) Brigade, and half the 138th Brigade. There was a considerable amount of heavy work, making trenches, and also the usual parades. Pte. Sherratt again gives an excellent description of the life there.

"We have landed somewhere at last, but very different from what we expected. I am at present 'somewhere in ASIA,' having been through three Continents in eight days. We crossed the SUEZ yesterday, and are now settled in camp. Everywhere is sand, and we are right out in the desert, the nearest house being 12 miles away, and we see nothing but dirty tribes of Arabs and Egyptians, who are camping in the desert, and occasional camel convoys passing across. We are living on corned beef and biscuits, which is not a very nice diet, for a hot place like this, where there is no water to be got at all. We have to wash in the SUEZ, which is not far away, and, being salt, we have to wash ourselves with sand. I never saw anything like the natives here, they still have the old taskmasters, like we read of in the Bible, and he whips up the natives like a pack of dogs. They dress in long skirts in all colours of the rainbow, and look such a funny mob when they are in crowds. Of course we are in enemy territory now, and we shall be glad when the Turks come up to us and we meet them; it will 'liven things up a bit. The sand blows everywhere, and hurts our eyes, and the sun shining on the sand is trying; we can see nothing but sand."

Again on *January 21st*:—

"We are still in the desert, 20 miles from anywhere, and are having a pretty rough time. We have to live on biscuits—flag-stones we call them—and they are as hard as stones too. We are still working very hard, and have orders that we are to be constantly employed, and it is just as well, because men get so home-sick if they are allowed time to think. We get 'lights out' early, and get down just after dark. You can't imagine what the life out here is like, nothing but sand, and nobody living anywhere near. The only thing at all to 'liven us up is the canal; we get down there often and see the ships and people. We saw a big load of emigrants from AUSTRALIA the other day, there were heaps of children on board, and they did cheer us. The Arabs here are a very peculiar race of people. Thousands of them are working here. They work for little pay, I suppose, but are so dirty, and kick up such a terrible row. They sing over everything. They dress up in anything they get hold of, the more colour the better."

Some of the officers and men had leave to go up to CAIRO, and visit the PYRAMIDS, and other interesting places.

Meanwhile, on January 8th, GALLIPOLI had been successfully evacuated, and without any losses, although it had been feared that there would be heavy casualties. This left the GALLIPOLI Army free for the defence of EGYPT, and it was decided that the 46th Division should remain in FRANCE. Accordingly

the half of it which was in EGYPT was ordered to return to MARSEILLES.

They returned to ALEXANDRIA on January 30th, and sailed from there on February 5th, on board the *Transylvania*, in company with the 1st/5th and 1st/6th South Staffs.

The voyage back was not so pleasant as that to EGYPT. The idea of returning to the cold and wet of FRANCE was not very welcome, and the ship was not so comfortable as the *Beltana*. There were no special incidents on the voyage, except that the course of the ship was very erratic, evidently to avoid the danger of submarines. The *Transylvania* arrived at MARSEILLES on February the 10th. Next morning she went into the dock, and on the following day, February 12th, the Battalion landed, marched to the station, and entrained.

The train journey back was very trying. The men were crowded together, there being as many as thirty in one of the trucks, and there was only just room to stand up. They were three days and two nights in the train; and on February 14th they disentrained at PONT REMY, and were back amidst the mud, cold, and rain of NORTHERN FRANCE.



## CHAPTER V.

THE 1st/5th, FROM THE RETURN FROM EGYPT, FEBRUARY 14th, 1916,  
TO THE ATTACK ON GOMMECOURT, JULY 1st, 1916.

THE losses of the 1st/5th in October, 1915, had been a heavy drain on the resources of the 3rd/5th. One draft of 250 men departed at once, and another followed the day after Christmas.

The only method at this time of raising recruits was by voluntary enlistment, and, as men were not coming forward very quickly, Major Boote, Captain Felix Wedgwood, and others, made a special effort to obtain recruits. The difficulty of the recruiting was partly solved by Lord Derby's scheme, which came into force in November, 1915, and there were again scenes all over the country similar to those in August, 1914. The unfairness of the Derby scheme, which was still voluntary, and allowed many young men to escape, eventually caused the passing of the Military Service Bill, which established conscription, on May 24th, 1916. After this Act Colonel Blizzard was relieved of the responsibility of filling up the Battalion, and men were sent to him as required from the Depôts. The winter at BELTON PARK passed quietly. There was much mud in the winter months, and the camp became very uncomfortable, as it had not been laid out for bad weather. The only excitement was caused by the Zeppelin raids, on notice of which the camp was plunged in darkness.

At the end of 1915 the Division began to be moved to NOTTINGHAM, DERBY, and other towns in the Midlands; and in February, 1916, the 3rd/5th went by train to LONG EATON, a small lace-manufacturing town, between NOTTINGHAM and DERBY, where it remained until April, when it moved to hutments at CATTERICK BRIDGE, near RICHMOND, in YORKSHIRE.

Before continuing the History of the 1st/5th it is once more necessary to state shortly the course of Military events at the beginning of 1916.

On the Western Front the winter of 1915-16 had been fairly quiet. Neither side had made any attempt to break through, and both sides had been kept busy, trying to keep their trenches in proper condition. The methods of warfare, too, had changed, and there were many new scientific instruments for the trenches, such as improved hand-bombs and trench-mortars. Above all there had been an enormous addition to the artillery and aeroplanes. A new form of activity had also been invented by the Canadians, in the shape of raids, and there was also a great increase in mining operations.

The British Army was being continually reinforced, and the New Army was crossing the Channel every day. This enabled the British to take over part of the French Line, and, before the end of the summer, they had extended South from LOOS to the SOMME. On February 21st the Germans commenced their offensive by a violent attack on VERDUN, and this continued with great



CAPT. N. W. SLATER.



CAPT. E. N. B. H. SOAME.



CAPT. W. M. G. STOCKER.



CAPT. H. STONEMAN, M.C.



CAPT. J. SWALES, M.C.



CAPT. G. H. SWANN.



CAPT. F. E. TAYLOR.



CAPT. A. F. WEDGWOOD.

PLATE XIV.



CAPT. S. B. WILTON, M.C.



CAPT. T. WINT, M.C.



CAPT. S. H. WOOD.



CAPT. W. H. WOOD.



CAPT. W. T. WOOD.



CAPT. H. WOODWARD, M.C., M.M.



CAPT. G. J. WORTHINGTON.



LIEUT. R. B. C. AKER, M.C.

ferocity until the summer, when their efforts were cut short by the SOMME offensive.

As already stated, the 1st/5th had detrained, on their return from EGYPT, at PONT REMY, on February 14th, and on the same day they marched to BUIGNY L'ABBÉ. On February 21st they marched to BERNEVILLE, on February 29th to HEM, on March 1st to BOISBERGUE, on March 6th to REBREUVETTE, on March 8th to PENIN, and on March 13th they arrived at ECOIVRES, where they took the place of the 13th French Regiment. On March 19th they relieved the 1st/6th North Staffs. in the trenches at NEUVILLE ST. VAAST, where they remained until March 25th, when they were relieved by the 1st/6th North Staffs., and went for their rest back to ECOIVRES.

NEUVILLE ST. VAAST lies between LENS and ARRAS, and was part of the line recently taken over from the French, who were hurrying up their reinforcements to resist the Germans at VERDUN. The trenches were at first fairly quiet, but the men were much tried by the cold and wet, after being away from FRANCE for nearly two months. There was snow, followed by a thaw, and then a frost at night. They woke up in the night covered with snow, and their boots would be frozen to their feet, and no fires were allowed, as they were so close to the enemy. Pte. Sherratt again gives a little life to the description. He writes on the 30th of March:—"It is very exciting sport shell-dodging, and you seem to enjoy it when you know you are safe out of it! You can hear a shell coming some time before it lands. You should see us scatter as it gets nearer. We had a concert in the camp last night, and quite a fine show it turned out to be. We are with French soldiers now, and there were some Frenchies there. They enjoyed the band very much, and would not stop dancing. They told us they had a professional tenor amongst the Frenchmen, and so he had to give us a song; he had a fine voice. A chap in the Flying Corps got up, and gave us some sleight of hand tricks; he was very fine, and in peace time is on the stage, I believe. He also played us some songs on the mandoline, which he played beautifully. We had a step-dancer amongst us, besides the sentimental and comic singers, and always a few reciters. We all enjoyed it very much, and the parson is going to try to get two for the next time out."

On Easter Sunday they were out of the trenches, and still in the same sector, and he describes a football match held on that day.

"*25th April.* On Easter-day we played a ripping football match. A match was arranged between the Company, and our platoon took on three others. We expected to get a big beating, but we had a glorious game, and won 2—1. We played real Army Football, which means being very rough. We look forward to the scrimmages when about ten get on the ball at once, and you can't tell who's who. I thought there were about forty players once, when I was bottom man in the goal, with about twelve trying to get the ball."



NEUVILLE ST. VAAST was the locality where mining activities were very frequent. During one tour, on March 29th, the Germans exploded a very large mine under the trenches occupied by the 5th South Staffordshire Battalion in the sector adjoining that held by the 5th North Staffs. As soon as the explosion had taken place the enemy attacked, determined to occupy the crater. A Company of the North Staffs. holding the sector, and commanded by Captain Wenger, promptly sent out a Lewis Gun, which opened fire, and, largely owing to their promptitude, the attack failed.

On March 31st Lieut. Reginald WOOD was shot by a sniper, and killed, while examining a sniping post.

On April 19th the 46th Division was relieved, and marched Southwards from the VIMY area, and took over a sector South of ARRAS, extending from MONCHY-AU-BOIS to GOMMECOURT, from the 48th Division. This sector was considered a quiet part of the Line. The 48th Division had held it for nearly a year, and had had few casualties.

The 1st/5th North Staffs. left ECOIVRES, where they had returned to rest on April 16th, and marched to CHELERS on April 19th. On April 21st they marched to MARQUOY, on April 23rd to ST. POL, and on May 5th took over the trenches at FONQUEVILLERS from a Battalion of the Royal Warwicks. The village of FONQUEVILLERS, although only three or four hundred yards from the front Line, was not badly knocked about, and quite a number of houses were intact. Thanks to the contour of the country and the large number of trees, troops could walk about the village with comparative impunity, although it was not comfortable to loiter near the Church and cross roads. The road leading to SOUASTRE was open to wheeled traffic and even troops in broad daylight. The enemy did not shell the trenches to any great extent, but indulged in a certain amount of practice with a heavy trench-mortar by night. There were a considerable number of communication trenches leading from the village to the front Line, but the majority of these had not been kept up during the winter, and, if not impassable, were in a very bad state of repair. The front Line had been held by posts during the winter, and the trenches between the posts were filled in by wire, so that a visit from one post to another necessitated a considerable détour. The work of improving communication trenches, and removing the wire, commenced almost immediately, and rumours of an impending attack were soon started.

On the 12th of May the Battalion was relieved by the 1st/6th S. Staffs., and marched back to the village of SUS-ST.-LEGER. There they were in a beautiful country close to the forest of LUCHEUX, and most of their time was spent in the forest cutting down the undergrowth and constructing hurdles. Later on they were set to dig lines of trenches three feet deep, reproducing the German trenches North of GOMMECOURT.

On June 6th the Battalion moved to BIENVILLERS. Here they supplied, daily and nightly, parties for work in the trenches. This was heart-breaking



No. III. ARRAS DISTRICT.



work, as the weather was very wet. The trenches, that were cleared, continually fell in again and filled with water, and the men returned to their billets wet through. Luckily they were not worried much by shelling.

On the 18th of June they moved back to SUS-ST.-LEGER, and practised the attack. After the last practice the Corps Commander, Lieut.-General Snow, addressed the officers, and told them what was to be done. He said that he had no doubt that the objective would be gained, but that the task of holding on to what was gained would be difficult. The idea was that by seizing and holding the GOMMECOURT Salient they would protect the left flank of the larger attack further South on the SOMME. The 56th Division was to attack on their right, and join hands with them on the far side of GOMMECOURT village, which was to be cut off and dealt with later.

There had been very heavy fighting in the early summer of 1916. At VERDUN the French had succeeded in holding up the Germans; in RUSSIA the Russians had recovered from their heavy defeats of 1915, and were gaining considerable success under General Brusiloff; and in ITALY the Italians, after withstanding a violent Austrian attack, were preparing an offensive of their own. It was now the turn of the British and French to attack, and they had decided to make the venture on the SOMME. The attack was to be made simultaneously by the British and the French, the former attacking to the North of the SOMME, on a line stretching from GOMMECOURT, a few miles South of ARRAS, to CURLU on the SOMME, whilst the French attacked on the South. The British aim in the opening stage of the Battle was the German first position. It was decided that to make this attack effective it was first necessary to destroy the enemy's lines by a prolonged bombardment. To do this on so large a front involved an enormous amount of artillery fire, and this was now possible, owing to the increased output of munitions. These preparations were very elaborate, and took considerable time. Vast stocks of ammunition, and stores of all kinds, had to be accumulated beforehand, within a convenient distance of the Front. Railways and tramways were built, and roads improved. Dug-outs were provided, as shelters for the troops, for dressing-stations and magazines. Scores of miles of deep communication trenches had to be dug, and also advance trenches, for the day of the attack. Much of this preparatory work had to be done under very trying conditions, and was liable to constant interruption from the enemy's fire. The weather, on the whole, was bad, and the local accommodation totally insufficient for housing the troops employed, who consequently had to content themselves with such rough shelter as could be provided. All this labour, too, had to be carried out in addition to the fighting, and to the everyday work of maintaining existing defences. It threw a very heavy strain on the troops, which was borne by them with a cheerfulness beyond all praise.

The German position was very formidable. It was situated on a high undulating tract of ground, rising about 500 feet above sea level. It had



LIEUT. M. A. ALLPORT.



LIEUT. W. S. ANGUS.



LIEUT. J. T. ARNOLD.



LIEUT. L. ARROWSMITH.



LIEUT. K. AYSLEY.



LIEUT. R. W. AYSLEY.



LIEUT. W. E. BAINES.



LIEUT. J. W. BARTLAM.

PLATE XVI.



LIEUT. S. BEARD.



LIEUT. C. A. BENSON.



LIEUT. W. A. BERESFORD.



LIEUT. J. D. BESWICK.



LIEUT. W. H. BILLINGTON.



LIEUT. N. F. W. BISHOP.



LIEUT. T. R. BLAND.



LIEUT. R. B. BLOORE.

been held for two years, and during that period no pains had been spared to render the defences impregnable. The first and second systems each consisted of several lines of deep trenches, well provided with bomb-proof shelters, and with numerous communication trenches connecting them. The front of the trenches in each system was protected by wire entanglements, many of them in two belts forty yards broad, built of iron stakes interlaced with barbed wire, often almost as thick as a man's finger. In addition to this the villages and woods were made into fortresses, and machine-gun redoubts had been built to protect important points. Behind all this were heavy masses of artillery, who knew to a foot the range of their own and the British trenches.

It was against such positions that the 46th Division were to make their attack, and they were put on the extreme North against one of the most formidable points, GOMMECOURT. The British Army designed for the attack was the Fourth Army, and also one Corps, the VIIth, under the command of General Snow, belonging to the Third Army. This Corps consisted of the 37th, 46th, and 56th Divisions. The 37th Division was on the extreme North or left of the attacking line; then came the 46th, opposite GOMMECOURT; and, holding the trenches near the village of FONQUEVILLERS, and in HEBUTERNE to the right, was the 56th Division. Beyond them began the VIIth Corps of the Fourth Army.

It will be seen from the above description what were the general arrangements for the attack, and it is now necessary to go back to the doings of the 5th North Staffs.

When the Battalion returned to the district on June 6th, the preparations for the attack were being made, and the men had to take their full share in the most arduous and dangerous work of completing the trenches. An extract from a diary of an officer of "A" Company who had only just joined the Battalion, shows the sort of life endured by the officers and men during these days of preparation.

*"Friday, 16th June.*—Accompany digging party to the trenches near FONQUEVILLERS, am introduced to the "VIENNA" trench. Lennox Holman and I go up to the front Line under difficulties, the trench breached in sundry places, and German lines visible; watch anti-aircraft guns shelling our 'planes. No good!

*"Sunday, 18th June.*—Take No. 1 Platoon on R.E. fatigue to FONQUEVILLERS. Go up to the front Line with Keeling and Captain Worthington—2 p.m. Recalled to BIENVILLERS; march about nine miles back, to SUS-St.-LEGER.

*"Monday, 19th June.*—Platoon Inspections—Officers' Brigade Pow-wow (meeting)—shown model of Hun trenches.

*"Tuesday, 20th June.*—Out all day practising attack. General Snow (commanding VIIth Corps) and General Allenby (commanding Third Army) watch the show.



"*Wednesday, 21st June.*—Battalion moves to FONQUEVILLERS. 'C' and 'D' Companies in the Line, 'A' and 'B' in reserve in the village in cellars and dug-outs. We had relieved the 4th Leicesters."

On June 24th the bombardment began, and never ceased, except for half-an-hour each afternoon, whilst the British aeroplanes went over the lines to take photographs. The Germans did not send many shells back, but carefully registered the communication trenches and cross roads, and put salvoes of heavies into the village. The lot of the two Companies in reserve in the village was anything but happy. As soon as it was dusk every available man had to turn out to dig assembly trenches and clear the communication trenches. Returning usually wet through about 4 a.m., they were called out again about 9 a.m. for various tasks, such as pumping water out of the trenches, building dug-outs, carrying meals to the front Line, with the din of the bombardment always in their ears, and shells dropping around. No wonder they were soon worn out.

A considerable distance separated the opposing front Lines, and it was not until the bombardment had commenced that it was decided to dig a jumping off trench in front of the British Lines. The 6th North Staffs., who were back at HUMBERCOURT, a mile or two in the rear, were detailed to do the digging, while the 5th North Staffs. were to find covering parties.

On the night of June 22nd the parties went to dig the advance trench, and on the first night all went well, the only trouble being the usual bursts of machine-gun fire. During the next day the Germans discovered what was being done, and were naturally on the look-out for the working parties on the following night. The same officer gives a full account of what happened.

"*Friday, June 23rd.*—'Bill' Robinson (the elder son of the Mayor of Stoke) and I were told off with a large party of 'A' Company to work under Captain Wenger. We drew tools from a store in the main street of FONQUEVILLERS (we were living in a cellar in the GOMMECOURT Road, about 200 yards East of the Artillery Cross Roads), and stood under the shelter of the houses until we received the order to move off. It was a vile night, raining and cold. Major Charles Boote (who had been with the 5th North until the end of 1915, and was now in command of the 6th North) came along and chaffed us. 'What, the 5th North working again! Well, well, well!' Everyone grinned, and felt better. We pushed off, past Church Corner, and up a big communication trench, nearly to the front Line. It was fearfully muddy and wet. Captain Wenger went into one hole almost up to his chest. I took my party off to the left, spread them out and set them digging. The trench was about two feet deep, one foot of it consisting of liquid mud. We were about 50 yards behind the front Line. The 6th North were digging a trench for the attack, 150 yards in front of the old Line, and 100 yards from the Hun. We could hear the clink of pick and shovel, and they were talking. The Hun was very quiet; except for a few flares he did nothing. Too little, in fact, for one felt mischief

brewing. I was walking up and down by the trench, but met Captain Wenger, who advised me to find 'a hole,' and keep my eye on it—in case.

"For half or three-quarters of an hour things went on quietly. Quite suddenly, about 12-30, heavy machine-gun fire broke out to our front. I located my hole, but did not get in. It suddenly increased in volume, and I dived in. At the same time heavy shelling and trench-mortar fire was directed at us. I was sharing a cranny with my sergeant, and we lay very flat in the mud. Bullets flirted through the scanty parapet which had been thrown up, and pieces of shell metal whizzed down and hit the ground near us, and I contrived to make my 'tin hat' a kind of umbrella, but, peering under the edge, the air seemed to be full of dazzling flashes and puffs of smoke—just visible against the sky. The only comment one made was, 'Where the blazes are our artillery?' The firing gradually stopped, after about six minutes, and the message was passed down, 'Anyone hurt?' Luckily none of my party had suffered. We sat tight a while, and then came the order, 'File out.' We started to do so, but a sharp burst of shelling checked us! It was then our own guns replied, the whole sky behind us was instantaneously lit up with a great white light, and almost at once our shells rushed overhead. We heard afterwards that many new guns brought up for the main SOMME attack fired that night.

"The main communication trench was a weird experience. We got scattered in it, but I pushed down to Church Corner, where I got most of my lot together. The trench itself was packed with men, scrambling and sliding in the mud, but making way for 'walking wounded' and stretchers."

The Stafford Brigade suffered severely in those six minutes of concentrated fire, and had nearly 100 casualties. Lieut. Paxton of the 5th North was shot through the arm.

The preliminary bombardment, which had commenced on June 24th, extended all along the British Front, as well as in the SOMME Region. The preparations for an attack had not passed unnoticed by the Germans, and they were quite prepared for it, though they expected it to be rather nearer ARRAS. In several trenches they had even hoisted up placards, saying: "Come on, we are ready for you."

On June 25th the Allies' air services made a magnificent coup. To a stranger approaching the lines one of the most astonishing sights was that of the long line of observation balloons stretching as far as he could see in both directions. These are "the eyes" of the Armies, and even solitary soldiers at first think that every movement they make in the open is watched. On this day an attack was made on the German balloons, nine of which were destroyed, and the remainder were hauled down.

The bombardment was to continue until the 28th, which was the day originally fixed for the opening of the attack. It was the most extensive



bombardment up to then, of the War, and was the fruit of many months of preparation.

The 5th North Staffs. were still in the Line, and, during the next two days and nights, continued working at the trenches, and completing the advance trench. On the 26th they went to HUMBERCAMP with the 6th North Staffs. for "two days' rest," having been relieved by the 4th Leicesters.

The great attack had originally been fixed to take place at 7-30 on the morning of June the 28th, but, on the preceding days, the weather had broken, and many heavy thunderstorms had filled the trenches with water, and made them almost useless; so it was decided to attack instead three days' later, on July 1st, and consequently the Battalion had three more days out of the trenches, though there was not much "rest." During these three days the bombardment continued, but does not seem to have been so heavy, and the Germans repaired some of their wire.

On the night of June 30th the Battalion went to their allotted position in the Line. It was very hard work going up the Communication trenches, as they were full of mud caused by the recent rain. According to orders six officers and a fixed number of N.C.O.s were kept out of the fighting, to form a basis for the Battalion, in case of overwhelming disaster.

As already stated the 46th Division was placed in the trenches in front of the village of GOMMECOURT, which formed a salient, and was one of the most important parts of the German system. The Germans were expecting the attack to extend from ARRAS to ALBERT, and so were quite ready for it, in that sector. It will thus be seen that the Division had to attack under every disadvantage, and, what was more, they would be subject to enfilade fire from the left, as they were on the extreme flank. The 37th Division on their left were not to take any part in the attack.

Sir Douglas Haig, in his despatch, says:—"The British main front of attack extended from MARICOURT on the right, round the salient at FRICOURT, to the ANCRE in front of St. PIERRE DIVION. To assist this main attack, by holding the enemy's reserve, and occupying his artillery, the enemy's trenches, North of the ANCRE, as far as SERRE inclusive, were to be assaulted simultaneously; while further North a subsidiary attack was to be made on both sides of the salient at GOMMECOURT."

The aim, then, of the 46th and 56th Divisions, was not so much to take GOMMECOURT as to prevent its defenders helping in the defence further South. The Battalion took up its position in the early morning of July 1st. They were behind the 6th North in lines of Companies, "D" being in front, then "C," "B" and "A." They were to follow up the 6th North, and consolidate. It was, as far as the two Battalions were concerned, a reversal of their positions in the attack on the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT on October 13th, 1915.

It will be best to describe the action first in general terms, so as to give a framework, and then fill in the picture with personal details. The final

artillery preparation began at 6-30 a.m. and was concentrated on the front German trenches. The day dawned hot and cloudless, with a thin fog, the result of the damp of the past week, clinging to the hollows. The bombardment lasted until 7-30, when it lifted, and all along the front the British troops went over the top.

Sir Conan Doyle, in Volume II. of his "History of the War in FRANCE," gives the following account of the attack of the 46th Division:—

"The assault was carried out by two Brigades, each upon a two-Battalion front. Of these the 137th Brigade of Stafford men was on the right, while the 139th Brigade of Sherwood Foresters was on the left, each accompanied by a Unit of sappers. The 138th Brigade, less one Battalion of the Leicesters which was attached to the 137th, was in reserve. The attack was covered so far as possible with smoke, which was turned on five minutes before the hour. The general instructions to both Brigades were that, after crossing No Man's Land, and taking the first German line, they should bomb their way up the communication trenches, and so force a passage into GOMMECOURT WOOD. Each Battalion was to advance in four waves at fifty yards' interval, with 6 feet between each man. The average equipment of the stormers, here and elsewhere, consisted of steel helmet, haversack, water-bottle, rations for two days, two gas helmets, tear-goggles, 220 cartridges, two bombs, two sandbags, entrenching tool, wire cutters, field dressing, and signal flare. With this weight upon them, and with trenches that were half-full of water, and the ground between a morass of sticky mud, some idea can be formed of the strain upon the infantry.

"Both the attacking Brigades got away with splendid steadiness upon the tick of time.

"In the case of the 137th Brigade the 6th South Staffords and the 6th North Staffords were in the van, the former being on the right flank where it joined up with the left of the 56th Division, composed of London Territorials. The South Staffords came into a final blast of machine-gun fire, as they dashed forward, and their track was marked by a thick litter of dead and wounded. None the less they poured into the trenches opposite to them, but found them strongly held by infantry of the 52nd German Division. There was some fierce bludgeon work in the trenches, but the losses in crossing had been too heavy, and the survivors were unable to make good. The trench was held by the Germans, and the assault repulsed. The North Staffords had also won their way into the front trenches, but in their case also they had lost so heavily that they were unable to clear the trench, which was well and stoutly defended. At the instant of attack the Germans had put so terrific a barrage between the lines that it was impossible for the supports to get up, and no fresh momentum could be added to the failing attack.

"The fate of the right attack had been bad, but that of the left was even worse, for at this point there was experience of a German procedure which

was tried at several places along the Line with most deadly effect, and which accounted for some of our very numerous losses. The device was to stuff their front line dug-outs with machine-guns and men, who would emerge, when the wave of stormers had passed, attacking them from the rear, confident that their own rear was safe, on account of the terrific barrage between the lines. In this case the stormers were completely trapped. The 5th and 7th Sherwood Foresters dashed through the open ground, carried the trenches, and pushed forward on their fiery career. Instantly the barrage fell, the concealed infantry rose behind them, and their fate was sealed. With grand valour the leading four waves stormed their way up the communication trenches, and beat down all opposition, until their own dwindling numbers and the failure of their bombs left them helpless among their enemies. Thus perished the first Companies of two fine Battalions, and few survivors of them ever won their way back to the British Lines. Brave attempts were made during the day to get across to their aid, but all were beaten down by the terrible barrage. In the evening the 5th Lincolns made a most gallant final effort to reach their comrades, and got across to the German front Line, only to find Germans. So ended a tragic episode. The cause which produced it was common to the whole Northern end of the Line, and depended upon factors which neither officers nor men could control, the chief of which was that the work of our artillery, both in getting at the trench garrisons, and in its counter-battery effects, had been far less deadly than had been expected. The losses of the Division came to about 2,700 men."

The attack of the 56th Division, South of the 46th, on the Southern side of the GOMMECOURT peninsula, though urged with the utmost devotion and corresponding losses, had no more success; and it was only right down in the South where the XVth and XIIIth Corps were attacking near MAMETZ that a substantial success was gained.

A few facts were subsequently learned about the Germans defending GOMMECOURT. The Germans had expected an attack up to June 27th, but on June 30th they began to be doubtful about it. The British bombardment had caused great havoc with the enemy's trenches, but not many casualties, only six men being killed, and 44 wounded, this being due to the excellence of their dug-outs. The one hour's bombardment on July 1st had destroyed the wire 50 metres wide in front of the trenches, and in many places made the front trenches untenable, even shattering the defences as far back as the third line, but even this was not sufficient. They were still able to open fire with terrible effect, and had also been able to bring up their reinforcements. Their casualties on July 1st were about 600 men.

The 5th North Staffords, as soon as the attack commenced, were overwhelmed by the German barrage. It especially caught the parties in the Communication trenches, and as a result they could not advance to the help of the 6th North Staffords, who were shot down by the machine-guns and

rifles. A few men and officers reached the German front Lines, but could do nothing. One man, Lance-Corp. R. Tivey, describes his experience in a letter:—

“We went over in broad daylight, and in full view of the enemy lines. Attached to my wave would be some 25 men. We mounted all together, keeping extended order line, about two yards’ interval, and set off at an easy pace for the next trench. After having proceeded no more than 20 paces, the whole line fell as one man, leaving me running, whereupon I was struck for the first time and fell. I did not know what had happened really, and surmised the line had been wiped out, since deliberate rifle fire and maxim-fire was concentrated on us. I crawled some yards half left, but my wound was not bad enough to admit of returning, so I rose again, and ran in quarter circles for the enemy trench. This time shrapnel was bursting, and I was the centre of fire. A bullet grazed my thumb, and I lost my rifle, another hitting my shrapnel helmet.

“When within some ten or twenty yards of the enemy barbed wire, I was struck again, doubling me up. Close by was a shell-hole, into which I crawled, the Germans shooting at me when I was down, and hitting the sole of my boot. They turned the maxim on me, and sniped at me if I made a movement. Heavy ‘Crumps’ and ‘Mortars’ were bursting all around. That I did not go mad is more than I can explain away, but I kept remarkably cool. After 12 hours of it, I crawled out, under cover of dark, and made my way back. This was difficult, since my wounds had caught me in the back and stomach, and I was bent nearly double.”

Captain G. J. Worthington, who was in command of “A” Company, gives a full description of his share in the battle:—

“The attack was to be launched in a series of lines. The 6th North and 6th South were to lead, supported by the 5th North and 5th South. The 5th North was largely split up into bombing, blocking, and carrying parties, several of these parties being detailed to the 6th North. ‘A’ Company was in reserve, and, after providing a party to be attached to the Machine-gunners as carriers, trench wardens, storemen, and various other details, it found itself reduced to less than 50 men, and a few odds and ends left over from ‘D’ Company. One officer per Company was left behind in the Transport lines.

“On the evening of June 30th we marched up again to the trenches, and took up our positions for the attack at 7 a.m. on the following morning. The orders were that at four minutes to Zero the men in every line except those in the advanced trench were to turn to their right, and file up the first communication trench, until they reached the front Line. There they were to deploy and follow the preceding line over the top. My orders were, to commence moving up from the village at that time, place my men in the support line, and then report to Battalion Headquarters, which would be by that time in the dug-out vacated by the 6th North, in a communication trench close behind the front Line.

"The final bombardment commenced at 6 a.m. and was very severe; the noise in the village being terrific. The journey up the communication trench was not exactly pleasant, as the enemy was pitching his shells very accurately, and I had several casualties, including one sergeant killed. The majority reached the support line, and I proceeded to make my way forward with a runner. After going a short distance I found the trench blocked by a small party of Leicesters. The rear man told me that their Colonel was in front, and that they were unable to go on, as the attack had been held up. Another party of Leicesters came up behind us. Shells were dropping all round, and an officer and sergeant-major of the party behind were killed.

"I managed to reach Colonel Jones of the Leicesters, and together we made our way forward over dead bodies, and wire entanglements that had been dropped by the carrying parties, until we reached an assembly trench a short distance in rear of the front Line. Here I met Captain Fletcher, who was in charge of the 4th or 5th line, who told me that things had gone badly, and the third line had not got across, and the attack had come to a standstill.

"I went forward to my Battalion Headquarters, and found Colonel Burnett at the telephone, speaking to the Brigadier, who told him that he must reorganise the attack and push on. Besides the Colonel there were in the dug-out Captain Wilson, adjutant; Major Tomlinson, the 2nd in command of the 6th North; Captain Wilton, who had been wounded, and one or two others. Colonel Burnett then announced that he was going out to see what was going on, and told me to remain where I was. I believe that he met Captain Fletcher, and sent him forward to the advanced trench.

"After the Colonel had been gone a short time the Brigadier asked for him on the telephone, and several runners were sent to find him, but failed to do so. It afterwards transpired that he had been mortally wounded. The Brigadier then told me to get into touch with the Colonel of the 5th South Staffs., reorganise, and attack again at 3-30 in the afternoon, in co-operation with the 5th South Staffs. on the right, and the 6th Sherwood Foresters on the left. At this moment Major Wenger arrived, and took over the command. By his orders I went out and proceeded with the work of reorganisation, which consisted in sorting out the men of the three Battalions, 5th and 6th North and Leicesters, who were all mixed up. The 5th North were collected in the front Line, the Leicesters in the assembly trench in rear, and the 6th North in the support line. By the time some kind of order had been established it was well on in the afternoon, the weather was very hot, and the men were exhausted.

"Major Wenger had meanwhile got into touch with the Sherwoods on our left. We were told that we were to wait for a smoke barrage before attempting to advance. Shortly before 3-30 p.m. a few puffs of smoke were seen, and the enemy immediately put down a Shrapnel barrage, and we were about to attack when an order arrived from the Brigade that we were to stand fast.



LIEUT. N. BLUNT.



LIEUT. O. W. BODDINGTON.



LIEUT. R. P. BOLTON.



LIEUT. W. T. BOSTOCK.



LIEUT. A. W. BOULTON.



LIEUT. B. F. BOULTON, M.M.



LIEUT. W. A. BOWERS.



LIEUT. A. A. BOWLER.



PLATE XVIII.



LIEUT. W. R. BRACEY.



LIEUT. GEO. BRAYFORD.



LIEUT. W. E. BRIDEAUX.



LIEUT. D. E. BRIDGWOOD.



LIEUT. S. B. BRIDGWOOD, M.C.



LIEUT. F. E. BRINDLEY.



LIEUT. G. W. BROADHURST.



LIEUT. G. B. BROWN.

"Some time later Major Wenger came and told me that the Leicesters would take over the trenches, and we should go out. He sent me down to Brigade Headquarters for instructions, which were that we were to assemble at a point in the village, and then march back to the Corps line. Before I left a report came in that the enemy had been observed assembling in GOMMECOURT WOOD for a counter-attack, so we had to stand fast. As nothing happened, and the report was not confirmed, the Battalion was relieved, and reached the Corps line in the early hours of the morning of July 2nd. The same afternoon we marched to BAILLEULMONT, and relieved the 37th Division in the section North of MONCHY on the evening of July 3rd."

It will be seen from the above accounts that the attack had failed. It had, however, occupied the attention of the defenders of GOMMECOURT, which was the main object of Sir Douglas Haig. The story is in many details the same as that of October 13th, 1915, and is another example of the impossibility of infantry succeeding unless the opposing defences have been destroyed by artillery fire. Courage, however great, is of no avail against bullets and shells.

The casualties of the day were very heavy; seven officers were killed, namely, Colonel W. BURNETT, Captain G. H. FLETCHER, Lieutenants W. AUBREY BOWERS, ELI ROBINSON, A. D. CHAPMAN, A. C. WATKIN, and R. B. MELLARD. There were also wounded—Captain S. B. Wilton, Lieutenants S. C. Fawcus, A. G. Paxton, R. Downing, and D. G. Jarvis Jones. The casualties amongst the men were about 300.

The 6th North had suffered even worse, and, amongst the nine officers who were killed, was Colonel C. E. BOOTE, who had just taken over command, and who, during 1914, and previous to the War, had been with the 5th North. How these officers died in many cases is not known, but there is a fine story of the death of Captain FLETCHER, who went forward after a check to rally the men. As soon as he got over the parapet he "was hit in the arm, but refused to go back. Someone then sent back word to retire. He simply shouted, 'The 5th North never retire! Come on!' and a few moments afterwards was killed."

Lieutenant A. C. WATKIN, when he found the trenches were blocked, went outside to see what was happening, and was killed. Lieutenant ELI ROBINSON, who had gone forward with Colonel Burnett, organised a party and moved forward, but soon after he and most of his men were killed. Lieutenant BOWERS was shot when going up the communication trench, and died the following day.

An officer wrote home:—"It is really wonderful that so many escaped with their lives. We were terribly shelled in the communication trenches. One officer had a bullet through his water-bottle, another had his rolled-up coat torn off his back with a shell, another had a bullet through his sleeve. Lieut. Scrivener had his wrist-watch smashed by a bullet, and his mackintosh blown to ribbons, but was unwounded."

A few lines from the pen of Mr. Beach Thomas, the *Daily Mail* War Correspondent, may fitly close this chapter. His account was headed "The GOMMECOURT Epic," and the action is described as "the most glorious feat of the battle . . . an attack that failed at the spot, but made possible success elsewhere."

"Our attack at GOMMECOURT was as heroic as anything in the War. . . . Through the enemy's three barrages of intense fire our men marched quite steadily, as if nothing was in the way, as if they were under review. At every step men fell. . . . When these steady, steadfast soldiers, true to the death, paraded in more than decimated numbers through and across the third barrage, the enemy—in their turn heroic—left their trenches, erected machine-guns on the parapets, and the two parties fought one another in the open. I have not the hardihood to write more. . . . Heroism could no further go. Our men died; and in dying held in front of them enough German guns to alter the fate of our principal and our most successful advance in the South. *They died defeated, but won as great a victory in spirit and in fact as English history or any history will ever chronicle.*"

“Candle-Light.”

CANDLE-LIGHT is so mellow and warm  
When a man comes in all hungry and cold,  
Clotted with mud or wet with the storm—  
Only of candle-light you shall be told.

Of Madame's brave, sad eagerness  
And French serenity of dress,  
Her quiet, quick ways as she goes  
To dry our heavy, sodden clothes  
And bring all hot the great ragoût  
That makes once more a man of you,  
Her pains to help us put away  
The sights that we have seen all day,  
Her talk of kine, and oats, and rye,  
And François' feats when but so high—  
You'd never guess, did you not know,  
He died for France three months ago.  
And then there's Marthe, whom he has left  
(So proud, and yet so all bereft),  
And Marie, with her hair in ties,  
Looking at you with great round eyes  
That make you wish to Heaven you were  
The Hero that you seem to her.  
And last, and least,  
There's François' little Jean-Baptiste,  
For whom, deep slumbering in his cot,  
All wounds and wars and deaths are not. . . .

Such is the household every night  
Illumined by the candle-light.

Searchlights are so blinding and white,  
The things they show you shall not hear;  
Enough to see them; it is not right  
We should tell of them too, my love, my dear.

Written by Lieut. Chas. J. B. Masfield,  
5th North Staffs.  
1916.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE 1st/5th, FROM GOMMECOURT, JULY 1st, 1916,  
TO THE END OF 1916.

THE 46th Division had suffered such heavy losses in their attack at GOMMECOURT that they were immediately withdrawn. On July 3rd, 1916, the 1st/5th N. Staffs. took over a line of trenches from the 13th Royal Fusiliers of the 37th Division. The trenches were a few miles South-West of ARRAS, and a few miles North of GOMMECOURT, and were in face of the ruined village of RANSART, which was occupied by the Germans. On their right were the S. Staffs., and beyond them the Leicesters and Lincolns, and on their left were the Sherwood Foresters. Their rest billets were alternately in the villages of BERLES-AU-BOIS and BAILLEULMONT. Each tour in the trenches was for four days, and they were relieved by the 6th N. Staffs. every four days. On July 5th Captain STONEY of the 2nd N. Staffs. joined up as Second in Command, and on July 24th Major FAWCUS of the 13th Manchesters was appointed Commanding Officer.

The sector was most peaceful, and, with the exception of a few shells and trench mortars, there was not much to worry about. One part of the trenches was not considered to be well placed, so it was decided to construct an advanced line of trenches. On August 3rd, the first night that this was attempted, the working party was discovered and fired at by machine-guns. The party had only just commenced their work, and there was not much cover. As a result there were 18 casualties, including Lieutenant C. F. HOLTOM, who received a wound from which he died the following day. The new trenches were eventually completed.

On August 9th Colonel Fawcus was wounded in a listening post by a shell splinter, and Colonel Stoney succeeded him in the command. (The same shell wounded a machine-gun officer standing by his side, and killed the latter's orderly.)

The losses of July 1st were replaced by further drafts of officers and men. The Base had been removed from ROUEN to ETAPLES, near BOULOGNE. The drafts crossed over from FOLKESTONE to BOULOGNE, and would remain at the base for four or five days, where they had some hard training. They lived in tents in a camp among the sandhills. They were marched by officers to what was called the "Bull Ring," a training ground in the sandhills, where they were handed over to special instructors, who kept them busy all morning. The officers, too, were taken to the "Bull Ring," and given final instructions on how to kill the Boches. Most of them before leaving were also given a course of draft conducting. After a few days they would entrain in the familiar "Cattle-trucks" and go up the line. Lieut. C. J. B. Masefield was one of these





LIEUT. H. S. L. BROWN.



LIEUT. W. S. A. BROWN.



LIEUT. T. BULL.



LIEUT. G. E. BULLOCK.



LIEUT. C. W. BUTTERFIELD.



LIEUT. W. A. BUXTON.



LIEUT. A. CHAMBERLAIN.



LIEUT. A. D. CHAPMAN.



PLATE XX.



LIEUT. S. W. CHESTER.



LIEUT. H. CLAY.



LIEUT. HAROLD CLIVE.



LIEUT. A. E. COCKAYNE.



LIEUT. A. COOK.



LIEUT. S. K. COPE.



LIEUT. L. M. COPELAND.



LIEUT. R. W. COPLAND.

officers, and had his first experiences of FRANCE at RANSART. and in his letters he well described the life.

Writing on July 3rd and 5th, when the Battalion had just taken over the new trenches, he says:—"The misery of the trenches was indescribable. Water generally up to our middle, sometimes for a mile of trench as deep as that. All look less like men than like some monstrous creatures born of mud, so coated and covered with it they were. We are in the front Line; but just here in the peculiar position of being unable to see the Boche's front Line, as we are on the crest of a rise, and Fritz down in the hollow below us. So what you see when you look over the parapet is merely a luxuriant growth of thistles and barbed wire for 10, 20, or 40 yards, and then nothing until, on the other side of the hollow 400 yards away, you see Fritz's second and third lines, barbed wire, etc. All we do really at the moment is to hold our line secure. . . . There is a sea of yellow mud everywhere, all over your clothes and hands, in the water you wash in (when you do wash), and standing water all over the floor of the dug-out I'm writing in. The men are wonderful. Their lives are several degrees wretcheder than ours, when it rains, yet I have not heard one grouse yet."

Another officer also describes these times. He says:—"When we arrived here it was a quiet spot where you could put your head over the parapet and have an easy time, but, as soon as the 46th arrived, they began to worry the Boche. An organised bombardment three times nightly on their transport and rest camps annoyed them so much, that they brought up an 8-inch naval gun, and blew our front Line to blazes. These shells make a hole 15 feet deep, and 30 to 40 across, and when they get a direct hit, which they often do, your trench simply disappears, and in its place is a crater. Last Wednesday we were bombarded for two hours. It was hellish. They picked out one Company front; it happened to be 'B' Company's (mine), and one Company front of the Sherwoods. At first everyone took cover, such as you could get. I happened to be on duty at the time, and was with my platoon. After about 20 minutes the air was black with smoke. It was one o'clock in the morning. It suddenly struck me that they might be going to raid us, so I jumped on the fire-step with my sergeant to see what was happening. After about five minutes we saw figures creeping through our wire. Without hesitation I loosed off my revolver, and the sergeant with his rifle, and the figures dropped. Then I rushed off, and got every man on the fire-step and opened rapid. It was not nice, because shrapnel was bursting at us, and a machine-gun traversing the parapet beautifully, but we ducked when we heard it coming. About a quarter of an hour afterwards our Sergeant-Major came and told me a patrol of ours, which was out when the bombardment started, had just come in. They lost their way and tried to get through our wire, but were heavily fired on and dropped in a shell-hole. I felt very thankful I had shot so badly, and, needless to say, I did not report the incident to Headquarters. The telephone wire

being cut we sent up rockets for artillery support. Our artillery replied for an hour, and in that time the guns behind us fired over a thousand shells, and all over guns within range were going as hard as they could, the Heavies as well. Wonderful to relate we only had two men wounded, but the Sherwoods on our left had heavy casualties. They were using trench mortars against them. We could see the fuses as they went over, and there was a continuous stream of at least six in the air at once. The Sherwood trenches were absolutely flattened, and ours were very badly knocked about. It's a hard life in the trenches, but we manage to keep 'Merry and Bright,' until a shell or a bullet comes and puts an end to it."

One of the men who had been with the band in the 3rd/5th gives another reason for the Boche's hate. Writing to Colonel Blizzard, he says:—

"We wish to apply to you for a small number of mouth organs, as we cannot play our drums and bugles in the trenches, because the Boche knows we have a better band than them, and if we play it, he will only try and smash us up, and that would never do"!

Another officer, newly arrived, writes:—"Our trenches are just opposite the village of RANSART. We overlook a small valley, and the Germans occupy trenches at the bottom. Luckily they cannot see us, so that we can look over the top of the trenches without much danger. During the day it is fairly quiet, with occasional artillery 'strafes,' but at night there is the continuous rattle of machine-guns, and the distant boom of artillery in the SOMME Battle. The sky is lit up by the flashes, and has the appearance of the firing up of Iron Furnaces near the POTTERIES. I am getting used to the life, and beginning to find my way about the trenches. All the trenches have wood gratings for the floor, and are fairly dry. Each officer takes his turn of patrolling the trenches at night. I pass along, being sometimes startled by a rat, and talk to the sentries. We gaze into the dark, watching the Verey Lights, and listening for the Boche. We send out wiring parties, and Lieutenant Lewty goes his nightly patrol."

One of the duties of the junior officers was to occupy so-termed forts behind the lines when the Battalion was in billets, and the same officer describes his tour.

"I took two platoons, and took charge of 'the fort.' It is really a muddle of dirty ditches, surrounded by barbed wire, and the only parts used are the dug-outs. I have a dug-out to myself, or rather I share it with the rats. Just behind us is a battery, and two of the guns are in a barn with a trap-door. When they fire the shells seem to pass just over our heads, and you look up expecting to see them, but don't. We are still within range of the Machine-guns, but walk about as if at home. On being relieved I went to BERLES, which is not much damaged, and there I had quite a nice billet in a farmhouse, with a bed. The bed was not much good, as I had to go out the same evening

with my platoon to work at the advanced trenches. We were there until 5-30 a.m., and got back at 6 a.m. very tired and dirty."

During this period there was attached to the 137th Brigade, as Chaplain, the Reverend G. A. Studdert Kennedy, M.C., the well-known writer, known to all the men as "Woodbine Willie." When the men were in the trenches he would frequently come round on his visits. He would visit Headquarters, and the officers in their dug-outs, and even crawl out to the listening posts. He took with him a large cardboard box with packets of Woodbine cigarettes, which he distributed. These were always very welcome, but not more so than the *Padré* himself. When the rumour went round that "Woodbine Willie" was on his rounds everyone brightened up, and he generally came when there was fighting. He went into the firing-line at GOMMECOURT to see to the wounded, and he put in three hours' hard digging on August 3rd, the night the advanced trench was started.

On Sundays, too, when out at rest, it was always a pleasure to hear him preach. He called a spade a spade, and his direct language always appealed to the men.

There were other visitors to the trenches. On one occasion General ALLENBY, commanding the Third Army, made a tour of inspection. As his visit was expected all preparations were made, and there was a regular "spring cleaning" of the trenches, bits of paper even being carefully removed. He came round with a long procession of "Red Hats," and if there was any "strafing" it was kept for those in authority.

Little incidents like these helped to vary the monotony of trench life.

On September 7th Lieut. Lewty was wounded. He was out with his nightly patrol when they ran into a German sentry, who fired at the party, killing one man and wounding Lieut. Lewty in the head. The bullet went through his steel helmet, which saved his life, however.

On September 19th the Battalion made a raid on the German trenches, with a party of five officers and 100 men. During the afternoon trench mortars were used for cutting the wire. At 11 p.m. fire was opened with guns, trench-mortars, and Machine-guns, and the raid followed. The raiders got into the trenches, had some fighting, and brought back some trophies, but made no prisoners. Three men were slightly wounded. For this raid Lieuts. J. E. LOWE and S. B. BRIDGWOOD received the M.C.

A few more extracts from Lieut. Masfield's letters will complete the RANSART picture.

*Aug. 17th.*—"Courses and trenches pretty well comprise an officer's life here. . . . I shot a partridge with my revolver in the trenches the other day—a sitting shot, needless to say! We had him for dinner to-night, a very welcome change from the eternal ration beef. . . . There are a lot about No Man's Land, where of course they have a very peaceful existence among the rank grass and thistles."

*Oct. 8th.*—"We raided the Boche trenches one night, and reckon about eight Boches were killed without any loss ourselves. Two of our officers have got the Military Cross for this (as above). In reply, the Boches paid us two return visits. The first was a complete failure, and they left a dead man behind them; but the second time, by dint of rushing at top speed into and out of the trench, they managed to take a prisoner back with them, but we think we hit some of them. As a result of all this, trophies are quite common in the Company—Boche rifles, caps, and cigars (carried by Fritz in his cap), etc."

*Oct. 17th.*—"We have been having a pretty quiet time lately, but while we were in the trenches Fritz took it into his head to shell this village (BERLES), and, as it is possible he may do so again at any moment, the men all have to sleep in caves cut out of the chalk, and we in cellars. Our cellar isn't at all a bad bedchamber—pretty dry, and we have moved our wire-netting mattresses down into it."

During all the time the Battalion was at RANSART the Battle of the SOMME had been raging. As the Battalion was now up to full strength, and had had over three months' comparative rest there was always an expectation of returning to the SOMME, and at the end of October the rumour ran that there was to be a change. On October the 26th the Battalion was in the trenches when the South Staffs. made a successful raid, and captured six prisoners, and on the 27th it was relieved by the 6th North Staffs. At 6 p.m. on the 28th it left the billets at BAILLEULMONT, and marched to HUMBERCOURT. There was rather an amusing incident during the march. The Battalion took the wrong road, and finally had to march into the village in single file by a footpath. Next day there was a short march to the picturesque little town of LUCHEUX, where they remained until November 1st, when they marched to FORTEL. On November 3rd they were again on the move, and marched to NOYELLES-AUX-CHAUSSEES, a small village in the neighbourhood of ABBEVILLE. The quarters here were very comfortable, and many of the officers and N.C.O.s enjoyed the luxury of real beds and sheets. The Battalion now commenced training, and were inspected by the Divisional General. Officers had been continually coming out from ENGLAND, and there was a large supply. Orders came through that ten of these officers had to be sent to other Units, and with great regret they had to leave the Battalion to which they were attached by so many ties of friendship and association.

A rearrangement of the Division caused the Battalion to go a few days later, November 11th, to another village, DOMVAAST. On November 22nd they were off again, passing through YVRENCEUX and ROUGEFAV (November 23rd), then to BOUQUEMAISON (November 26th), and finally on December 4th they arrived at ST. AMAND. On December 5th the 46th Division relieved the 59th Division in the MONCHY sector, between their former trenches at RANSART on the North, and GOMMECOURT on the South. The rest billets of the 5th North Staffs. were at ST. AMAND or POMMIERS. The trenches were





LIEUT. F. E. CORP.



LIEUT. C. S. COUCHMAN.



LIEUT. R. F. COWLISHAW.



LIEUT. A. C. R. DAVIES.



LIEUT. F. DAVIES.



LIEUT. H. R. G. DAVIES.



LIEUT. A. V. DAVISON.



LIEUT. F. E. DAVISON.



PLATE XXII.



LIEUT. O. S. B. DAWES.



LIEUT. D. DERRY.



LIEUT. G. S. DIX.



LIEUT. W. W. DOBSON.



LIEUT. R. H. DOWNING, M.M.



LIEUT. C. L. DUNN.



LIEUT. J. DUTTON.



LIEUT. E. D. EDE.

in a terrible state, and in many places had ceased to exist, so that the men had to occupy shell-holes. There was not much fighting, as the Battle of the SOMME had died out at the end of November, and the Germans were attacking ROUMANIA, which had entered into the War in August.

It was in these trenches that the 1st/5th spent Christmas Day, 1916, although the day was celebrated on December 28th, when they were at ST. AMAND.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE 2nd/5th. FROM ITS FORMATION, SEPTEMBER, 1914,  
TO JULY, 1917.

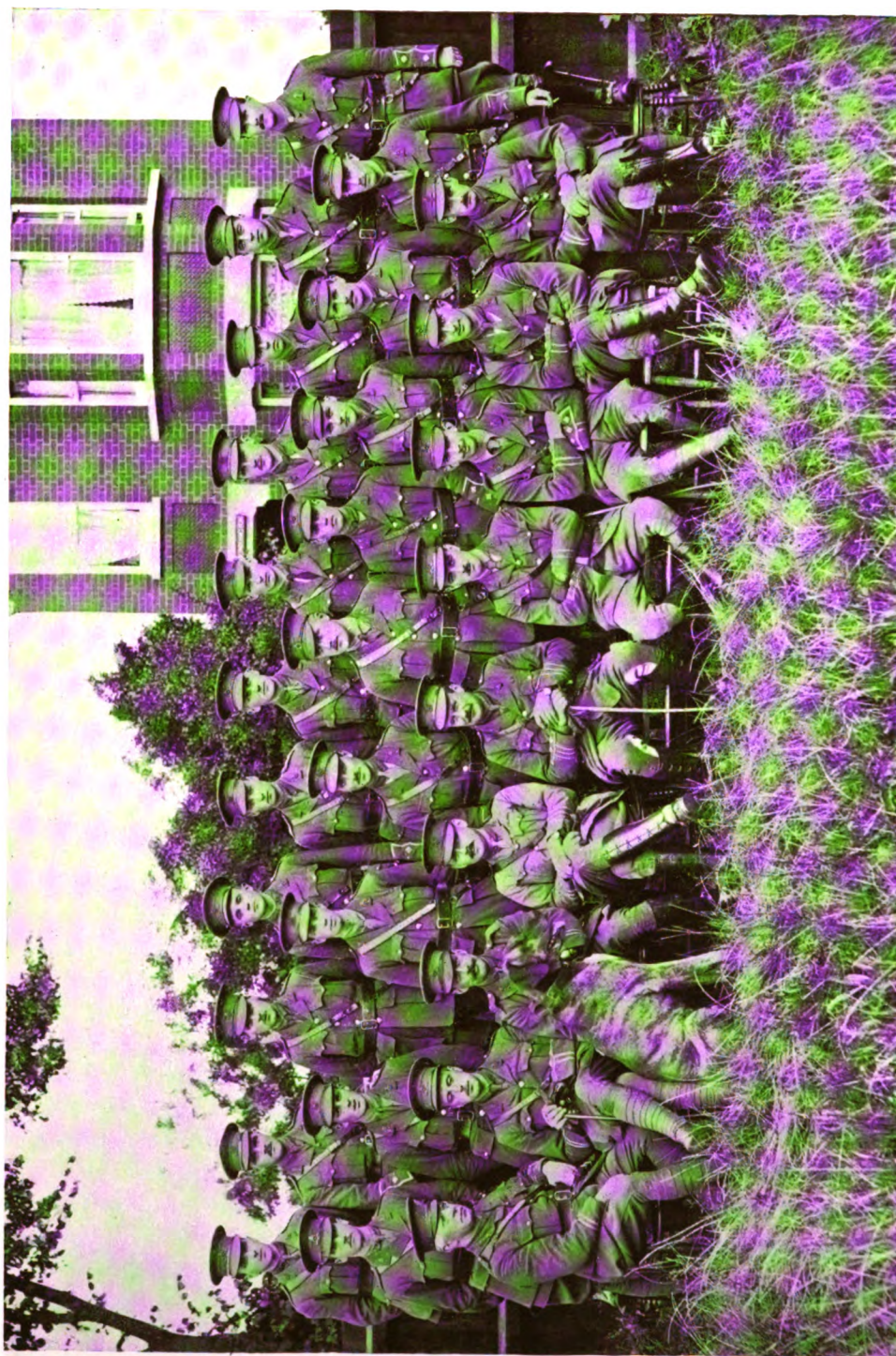
THE losses of the 1st/5th at GOMMECOURT and those caused by trench warfare were replaced by drafts of officers and men from the 3rd/5th. In September of 1916, whilst the Battalion was at CATTERICK BRIDGE, the 3rd/5th North Staffs. and the 3rd/6th North Staffs. were amalgamated into one Battalion, and Colonel Blizzard was given command of this Unit. From this time all the Battalions of the North Staffordshire Territorials began to feel a growing unity. As drafts were required they were sent out to either Battalion, and men and officers returning from FRANCE on account of sickness or wounds would be comrades whilst in ENGLAND in one Battalion. The result of this was that the distinction between the 5th and 6th North became less and less, and many officers and men served in both Units. In October the Battalion, now called the 5th Reserve North Staffs., left CATTERICK BRIDGE, and was quartered at LINCOLN. The men were scattered about the town, some being near the Cathedral, and others lower down in the town. The parades and training took place on the Racecourse.

Having to supply two Battalions, instead of one, caused a great strain on the home resources, and this was further increased, when in February, 1917, drafts had to be found for the 2nd/5th and 2nd/6th North Staffs., who had gone out to FRANCE with the 59th Division. This Division was composed of similar Units to the 46th Division, but, before describing the share it took in the fighting in FRANCE, it will be necessary to relate what the 2nd/5th North Staffs. had done since its formation.

When mobilisation for the War took place at the beginning of August, 1914, the 5th North Staffs. had only one Battalion, which was subsequently known as "The First Fifth."

On September 3rd, 1914, an Army Order was published ordering (as in the case of other Territorial Regiments) the formation of a second Battalion, to be called the 2nd/5th North Staffs. The Army Order stated that four officers and a suitable number of non-commissioned officers would be detached from the 1st/5th to form the nucleus of, and to recruit and train, the 2nd/5th. The officers selected were Captain Harry Johnson, Captain O. C. Bladen (the senior and junior Captains of the 1st/5th at the time), Lieut. D. H. Bodley and Lieut. L. Arrowsmith. They left the 1st/5th at LUTON on September 4th, with the N.C.O.s for Stoke, and within a fortnight the Headquarters of the new Battalion were established at BUTTERTON HALL, NEWCASTLE, a large and roomy house standing in extensive grounds.





2nd/5th OFFICERS.

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Col. W. W. Dobson was at first given the command, but he had to resign on account of bad health, and was succeeded in the command by Col. A. J. Hall, an officer of the 5th North Staffs.

The Battalion soon began to fill up, and the general enthusiasm brought forward many volunteers. It must never be forgotten that the men of North Staffordshire filled up voluntarily at the beginning of the War three Territorial Battalions, and sent even more recruits to other Staffordshire Battalions, and to other Units.

The life at BUTTERTON was most enjoyable, and the Battalion was soon one of the institutions of the district. The training was carried on like all training at the beginning of the War, both instructors and pupils having to learn, and any old soldier was a man of considerable importance, where nearly all, both officers and men, were recruits.

In February, 1915, the Battalion changed its quarters, and, leaving BUTTERTON HALL, was billeted at HARPENDEN, and became part of the 59th Division, which had its Headquarters at LUTON. The four Staffordshire Battalions formed the 176th Brigade, the Lincolnshire and Leicestershire Battalions the 177th Brigade, and the four Sherwood Foresters the 178th Brigade.

After the 2nd/5th joined the Division the training became rather more exacting, and when the 1st/5th went to FRANCE in March drafts had to be found to replace casualties. These drafts continued to go, and up to October, 1915, the 2nd/5th had sent 700 men to FRANCE.

In June, 1915, the Battalion was moved to ST. ALBANS, where it was put into billets in empty houses, and after a short time there it went under canvas at BATCHWOOD PARK. After the camping season it returned for the winter to ST. ALBANS. In October, 1915, orders were received to the effect that no more drafts should be sent out, and the Battalion should train for service overseas.

The winter was passed quietly at ST. ALBANS, with a few Zeppelin alarms, to vary the monotony, and the Battalion was daily expecting to go to FRANCE. In April, 1916, orders came that the 59th Division should go to SALISBURY PLAIN, and shortly before Easter an advance party was sent there to make the usual preparations. Everything now seemed settled, and it was considered certain that in the summer the Division would be out in FRANCE.

Events, however, happened in another part of the world which altered all plans. For some time there had been nasty rumours of impending trouble in IRELAND, and suddenly on Easter Sunday, April 23rd, a rebellion broke out in DUBLIN, and other parts of IRELAND. The authorities in IRELAND found themselves compelled to ask for further military assistance to quiet the Sinn Fein rebellion. The 59th Division was chosen for this work, and was ordered to go at once to DUBLIN. About 8 o'clock on the night of Easter Sunday, April 23rd, the order came through, and, though many men were



looking forward to Easter Monday, within twelve hours the Battalion was marching out of ST. ALBANS. On Monday morning they marched to BOXMOOR station, on the main L. & N. W. Ry. line, and there entrained. The train took them to LIVERPOOL, and they spent a rather uncomfortable night on the Landing Stage. On Tuesday morning, April 25th, they embarked and crossed over the Irish Sea to KINGSTOWN, where they arrived the same day. The night was spent at KINGSTOWN in a large empty hotel, where they were fairly comfortable. After breakfast on Wednesday morning, April 26th, they marched to the Royal Agricultural Grounds at BALLS BRIDGE just outside DUBLIN. On the way they were well received by the people, who supplied them with cakes and cigarettes. On their arrival at BALLS BRIDGE the Battalion took up a position in Lower Mount Street, relieving the Lincolns, with instructions to advance as best they could to DUBLIN CASTLE.

The Stafford Brigade was more fortunate than the Sherwoods, who had been the first to land. On their march to DUBLIN, they had been suddenly attacked by the Sinn Fein party with Machine-guns, and suffered considerable casualties. The fighting was still going on when the 2nd/5th arrived, as the rising was not quelled until the following Sunday. They occupied positions in the streets of DUBLIN in which the fighting took place, they lay out in the streets, or operated from the house-tops. Fortunately it was lovely weather. The Headquarters were in some schools, but the men were in the streets during the whole of the week, though temporary sectional reliefs were of course arranged. The way of fighting was peculiar, as shown by the following incident. A couple of motor lorries were obtained from Guinness' brewery; the engines were covered with iron plates, and old boilers were placed on the lorries. The lorries started along the street, and backed up to a house at a street corner. The men from the boilers crashed open the door of the house with crowbars, rushed in and upstairs to the windows, from which they got command of the street, and could keep it clear of rebels. They then fought their way down the streets, from house to house, and in this way gradually obtained possession of a good stretch of ground.

In two days the Battalion had advanced from BALLS BRIDGE to TRINITY COLLEGE, and there they met the 17th Lancers, who had come out from the Castle. They were allowed a day's rest at TRINITY COLLEGE, as no one had had much sleep during the two previous nights, and their place was taken by the 6th North Staffs. and a Leicester Battalion.

The casualties luckily had been very slight, consisting only of one man killed, and four wounded.

The rebellion was now beginning to collapse, and on the following day men were sent out to try and get the rebels to surrender, but they had not much success, and the 6th North Staffs. had some more casualties. In the afternoon the Battalion reached DUBLIN CASTLE, and was detailed to surround and storm Jacob's Biscuit Factory, one of the Sinn Fein strongholds. All

preparations were made for the attack, when, fortunately, on April 9th, at the last moment, the Factory surrendered, with 489 prisoners. A party was detailed, consisting of two officers and 80 men, who escorted the prisoners to LONDON WALL, and subsequently some to KNUTSFORD, and the others to STAFFORD.

The remainder of the Battalion took over a piece of "the Cordon" on the North Circular Road, and guarded this point for two days. After the surrender the troops were divided into small armies, whose duty was to visit various centres in Ireland to enforce order, and compel the surrender of arms.

Each of these armies consisted of half an Infantry Battalion, one squadron of Cavalry, one Field Gun, and one Armoured Car. The 5th North were divided into two groups, Colonel Hall with "A" and "B" Companies, and Major H. Johnson with "C" and "D" Companies. The first party marched on May 5th to KILKENNY, and afterwards to FULLAMORE, PORTARLINGTON, ROBERT'S TOWN, KILCOCK, MAYNOOTH, and finally on May 25th they marched back to PHENIX PARK, DUBLIN. The second party marched to CASTLEBAR, TEMPLEMORE, CASHEL, and CLONMEL, whence they returned to DUBLIN by train, on the 25th of May. There is no doubt that both parties enjoyed these tours, and they had good weather. They covered a large amount of country, and were well received. Their chief work was looking for arms, and they not only dug up gardens and fields for this purpose, but they also had to search even cinemas. Usually the work was fruitless. The country people were much interested in the field kitchens, which some of them considered to be mysterious instruments of warfare.

On May 25th, 1916, the whole Battalion was again assembled and camped out in PHENIX PARK, their duty being to defend DUBLIN, and to provide guards for the principal buildings. A month later, on June 25th, they went for musketry training to STRAFFAN, County KILDARE, where there was a lovely camp on the banks of the river LIFFEY. On October 3rd they left STRAFFAN, and returned to DUBLIN, being quartered in RICHMOND BARRACKS, where they remained until January, 1917.

After the Battle of the SOMME, on October 1st, 1916, the 59th Division sent 200 men from each of the 12 Battalions to FRANCE, and these men were replaced subsequently by fresh recruits. The 2nd/5th also lost the services of Colonel Hall, who was succeeded by Colonel Sir Alexander Bannerman.

On January 17th, 1917, the Battalion left DUBLIN, and, crossing over to LIVERPOOL, went to a hutment camp at CODFORD, near SALISBURY.

It was now certain that the next move would be to FRANCE, and the 59th Division was busily engaged in making final preparations. During their stay at CODFORD there was a very cold spell of weather, the ground being deep in snow. Just before leaving, on February 13th, the King came and inspected the Division, and the 5th North marched past before him.

On the night of February 23rd, when it was already dark, the Battalion fell in on the parade ground, and the roll call was taken, and soon after they marched off in silence to the railway station, where they entrained for FOLKESTONE. Next day, February 24th, they crossed the Channel and landed at BOULOGNE.

It will be once again necessary to describe the general situation of the War, as the winter of 1916/1917 had brought about many changes. At the end of 1916 the Germans and Bulgarians had dealt very severely with ROUMANIA. Although they had not entirely conquered her, they had driven her Army out of the greater part of the country, and taken BUKHAREST. The Roumanians had expected assistance from the Russians, but this had not come in sufficient strength to save the situation.

At the beginning of 1917 it became fairly evident that the Germans were determined to continue sinking all neutral ships, and that this policy would bring the UNITED STATES into the War. On April 6th, 1917, the long-expected happened, and the UNITED STATES joined the Allies, and declared War against GERMANY. This was a great encouragement, but almost simultaneously events in RUSSIA began to show that, although we had gained a new ally, we had lost the assistance of an old one. On March 15th, 1917, the Czar of RUSSIA had abdicated, and a new government was formed, which still promised to support the Allies. It was, however, certain that this support would not be very great, and it was now a question whether RUSSIA would collapse soon enough to allow the Central Powers sufficient time to overwhelm the Allies, before the UNITED STATES could render full assistance. The Allies also saw that they must strike quickly, if they were to take advantage of the events of 1916, before new reinforcements could be released by the Germans for the Western Front from RUSSIA.

On November 13th, 1916, the British had finished the campaign of the year by the Battle of the ANCRE. During December, which was wet and misty, nothing of importance could be done, but on January 11th, 1917, in spite of the cold weather, a successful attack was made on the spur of BEAUMONT HAMEL. More attacks, generally successful, were made during January and February, and on February 21st the enemy began to evacuate positions without fighting; and it was soon apparent that the Germans were going to retire to their "Invincible" HINDENBURG LINE. During the winter the British Line had been extended further South to ROYE, at the request of the French. This gave the British a most intricate front to watch, and the two armies to do this were the Fifth, on the North of the ALBERT-BAPAUME road, under Sir Herbert Gough, and the Fourth Army, South of the road to ROYE, under Sir Henry Rawlinson.

Now that it is necessary to relate the history of the two Battalions, it will not be so easy to follow events, but an endeavour will be made to describe the

events as they happened, bearing in mind that they are only items of the History of the War.

When the 2nd/5th arrived in FRANCE the 1st/5th was still holding the trenches opposite MONCHY, and enduring the discomforts of one of the hardest winters in modern times. During the winter there had been the usual incidents of trench life, which have been described already, though the actors had changed. Colonel Fawcus had recovered from his wounds, and resumed command, and Colonel Stoney, after an interval, was given the command of the 1st/6th North Staffs. The 2nd/5th landed at BOULOGNE, on February 24th, as has already been stated, and after only a short stay, trained to SALEUX, near AMIENS, where they had their first taste of French billets. They then marched through AMIENS and CORBIE to FOUILLOY. The following day, March 5th, they moved to FOUCAUCOURT, where they were in reserve. Two days later, on March 7th, the Battalion took over the trenches for the first time, from the 9th Durham Light Infantry. The trenches were beyond BERNY, East of AMIENS, and South-West of PERONNE, and on the road from AMIENS to ST. QUENTIN. They had not had much chance of gaining experience, though some of the officers had had a preliminary tour in the trenches, and there were others who had served in the ranks with the 1st/5th. The extension of the British Line required all the troops available.

Though the trenches were comparatively quiet the men soon realised the discomforts of life in FRANCE. There was the usual danger from sniping and shells, but it was the deep mud which made most impression, and which all describe as awful. After four days they were relieved by the South Staffs., and were glad to get back to the comparative comforts of "Rest."

During their second tour in the trenches, on March the 18th, the Germans began to retreat, and the Division had to follow them up. This retreat gave the British armies a new kind of warfare. Instead of being confined to a continuous trench, or series of shell-holes, the fighting was in the open. Before entering the evacuated villages all precautions had to be taken, and there was sometimes heavy fighting. The Division bore its due share in these operations, and more particularly in the capture of certain villages, ST. CHRIST, VRAIGNES, ROISEL, HERVILLY, LE VERGUIER, and HARGICOURT. At HARGICOURT the Germans had finished their retreat, and were back on the HINDENBURG LINE. Trench warfare was again established, and the 2nd/5th dug themselves in, and wired their front in the HARGICOURT and VILLERET area—due East of PERONNE, and between ST. QUENTIN and LE CATELET. Having got the trenches complete and ready for further trench warfare, they were relieved by a Cavalry Division. In these operations there were a considerable number of casualties. The first officer killed in the 2nd/5th was Lieut. W.M.N. POLLARD, on April 10th, and on April 19th Lieut. S. GREVILLE was killed. Sir Alex. Bannerman gave up the command during this period, and on May 5th Major H. Johnson was officially given the command.

An officer, Lieutenant E. Carhart, who had seen service in the ranks for a considerable time with the 1st/5th, and after his commission went out with the 2nd/5th, gives a history of their first days in FRANCE. (The names have been inserted.)

"MORCOURT, *March 1st*.—We are now quite within the War zone, and expect within a few days to be in the Line. The journey across the sea was just a repetition of two years ago. The weather has been fine, and to-day it is glorious, but the roads are beyond description, and even imagination. For the last two days we have been on the tramp, doing about 17 kilometres, with full kit, and reaching our destination in the dark. A terrible scrap has been going on, and we have heard the guns ever since we landed. I have never been so far South before, but I do not think it can be any different from the rest of the Line.

"FOUCAUCOURT, *March 8th*.—I have just been round the trenches and everywhere the ground is frozen hard. Yesterday it was wet, and the mud was over the knees. I had many interesting experiences of extracting the soldiers from the snares of the mud. This part of the Line is very quiet, although it has a world-renowned fame for its big 'pushes.'

"*March 11th*.—I have done my first trip in the trenches with the 2nd/5th. It is a very quiet spot, but the trenches are absolutely beyond description, and I felt very sorry for the men, because I knew from past experiences what it was like. We had quite a decent dug-out, and fed very well, but we did not by any means have a soft time. We have had snow, rain, frost and fog, but very little of actual warfare—the chief thing was privation."

On March 18th the 2nd/5th advanced to MALENCOURT.

"*March 18th*.—They are running, and we are after them! He was away yesterday at 'stand-to,' and we took over his trenches about half-an-hour afterwards. At the present time I am sitting in a German dug-out. The fire had not gone out when we came. I do not know how far he has gone, but fires are burning 7 miles away. The times are very exciting, entering dug-outs and trenches, for he has left all sorts of traps in the shape of bombs with time fuses set. The weather here has improved wonderfully this last day or two, but the mud is still very bad. The Boche trenches are much better than ours. The Hun has left several notes in the dug-out, 'Gott Strafe England,' 'Englishmen, we have gone; follow if you like, but you will have a long way to go.'

"*March 21st*.—We are still going forward, but as yet there are no signs of the Huns. The country is absolutely destroyed, and the Boches have burnt everything behind, and some of the villages are still burning. I am having quite an interesting time exploring villages, dug-outs, and other places. It is quite exciting, and I like it better than being stationary in trenches. The Boche system of defence and dug-outs and ammunition dumps is far beyond my imagination, and is greatly superior to that of the British and French.





LIEUT. C. EDWARDS.



LIEUT. J. E. B. ELLISON.



LIEUT. H. E. EMERY.



LIEUT. H. P. EVANS.



LIEUT. W. E. EVANS.



LIEUT. R. M. EWERS.



LIEUT. S. C. FAWCUS.



LIEUT. W. G. FORESTER.



LIEUT. O. FOSBROOKE.



LIEUT. C. J. G. GAFFORD.



LIEUT. J. H. GARRETT.



LIEUT. J. F. GARDNER.



LIEUT. H. R. A. GARNETT.



LIEUT. J. F. GIMSON.



LIEUT. W. GODDARD.



LIEUT. R. G. F. GOSS.

"We are having a much better time than ever I knew before in FRANCE. We have not caught forty prisoners yet, as the cavalry are always in front of us. I have heaps of Boche souvenirs. As far as the eye can see villages are burning, so I cannot say how far we have to go. I do not really think we shall be long before we strike him on a firm line of defence, but of course we take it as it comes.

"*March 25th, Sunday.*—It is a bright, sunny morning, and the air is clear and fresh. Everything around us is in ruins, but the scene is not unpleasant. We are now quite a long way off the Line, and the guns are only just audible. We have not gone back at all, it is the Line that has advanced, and we are at the head of a re-entrant. We cannot buy things, now that we are always on the move, and transport is rather difficult."

On March 27th the Battalion moved to BRIE.

"BRIE, *March 27th.*—Still advancing and living in Boche dug-outs. The weather is improving, so we are really having a better time, although it is quite cold at nights.

"*April 1st.*—The parcel has just arrived, and at the most opportune moment, as the rations were none too good. We cannot buy anything, as we move each day, trying to catch the Boche. To-morrow I think we shall get up to him, and then the fun will commence. As it is open warfare we have to dig in with our entrenching tools."

On April 2nd the Battalion marched from BRIE to ESTREES-EN-CHAUSSEE, and on April 3rd moved to VRAIGNES.

"VRAIGNES, *April 4th.*—We are all in a charming house, as the Boche has left the village complete. We have six beds, a dining-room, and a room for servants. There are tables, chairs, clocks, mirrors, in fact everything one requires. It was great sport entering the village; the Hun was just firing a few odd shells, as a last hope, but there were only a few casualties. It seemed strange to get into bed. We ransacked all the wardrobes for clean sheets. I do not suppose we shall stay here many days, as I expect some 'Red Hat' will come and turn us out. It is snowing very hard now, and has been wet all night."

Whilst the Battalion was at VRAIGNES, on April 9th, the Germans evacuated some trenches South of LE VERGUIER. A patrol advanced, but was fired at by Machine-guns and rifles. A platoon was then sent forward under Lieutenant W. Hayward to occupy some trenches in a wood, and was met by heavy Machine-gun and rifle fire, but they cut their way through the wire, and obtained their objective, with the loss of five men. The 2nd/6th North Staffs. then advanced through the Line, and dug themselves in 400 yards in front. On the next day, April 10th, "C" Company of the 5th North Staffs. was heavily shelled and compelled to retire. It was on this occasion that Lieutenant W. M. N. POLLARD and three men were killed, and four men wounded.

*"April 12th.*—The weather has been very trying, quite a lot of snow, rain, and cold winds, and we have been living out in the open. We are still following the Boche, and have had a lot of scrapping, and several casualties. We have just made an attack, and taken a village and a farm, after some resistance, and we have lost an officer killed, Lieut. Pollard, from DENSTONE College (a very popular master there). Our Company mess is in a cellar, which claims to hold 40 men. The Boche was in here four days ago, and the 59th Division took it at the cost of 200 men.

*"April 20th.*—My first wash and shave took place this morning, in a Boche steel helmet, after five days. Luckily the weather is glorious. We are still in the Line with open warfare, and have had several scraps with Hun patrols. Yesterday we had quite an exciting time running up against 20 Huns. We fired point-blank at each other, and we had several hit. The Huns retired, leaving me a glorious automatic revolver. Last night we lost an officer killed (Lieutenant S. Greville) and a sergeant prisoner."

On April 28th the Battalion went into Divisional Reserve at HANCOURT.

*"April 30th.*—At last we are out for eight days' rest—the weather is magnificent. To-night we are having a tip-top dinner, including soup, rabbit pie (local game), Welsh-rabbit, fruit salad, coffee and biscuits, and whiskey and soda. So I think to a certain extent we shall be 'doing' the food controller."

The Battalion remained at HANCOURT until May 5th, when they went up to the Line to relieve the 2nd/6th Sherwood Foresters. On the 8th a small attack was made by a party commanded by Lieutenant Bassett. They reached the German Line after passing through a gap in the wire, and bombed several dug-outs. The Germans, however, by rifle and Machine-gun fire, forced them to evacuate the position, with the loss of seven men killed or missing, and five wounded.

On May 20th the 2nd/5th N. Staffs. were relieved by the 2nd/5th S. Staffs., and on May 23rd they arrived at a camp near TEMPLEUX. The tents were in a quarry, and though they were not more than two miles from the Line they were well protected from artillery fire. During the nights they went out digging and wiring.

On May 30th they moved to HAMELET, on May 31st to EQUANCOURT, on June 11th to BEAUCAMP, on June 22nd to METZ, on July 1st back to EQUANCOURT, and on July 7th to BARASTRE.

Whilst they were in the METZ sector they were busy digging trenches, pushing forward posts, joining them up, and wiring them in, until they got up close to the German Line. (It was these trenches that were used for the jumping off point in the attack in the Battle of CAMBRAI in November.) On reaching BARASTRE the Battalion did some hard, intensive training, and also were brought up to strength by new drafts. It was now certain that there was something serious on foot, but, before describing what that was, it is necessary to return to the doings of the 1st/5th.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE 1st/5th, FROM THE BEGINNING OF 1917, TO THE BATTLE OF LENS,  
JULY 1st, 1917.

THE German retreat in March, 1917, had been confined to the district South of ARRAS, and mostly concerned the Fifth and Fourth Armies. The only part of the Third Army concerned in the retreat was the right sector near GOMMECOURT and MONCHY-AU-BOIS.

On March 7th, shortly before the general retreat, the 137th Brigade, including the 1st/5th North Staffs., was withdrawn from the trenches before MONCHY-AU-BOIS (where they had been since December, 1916), for a rest of ten days. Shortly before leaving, on the night of February 25th/26th, the 5th North had made a small raid and captured two prisoners, the first raid on that front for several months.

It had been decided to make an attack on the trenches at BUCQUOY, a few miles East of GOMMECOURT, which the Germans had evacuated on February 28th.

The following is the account of the action, given by one of the officers of "B" Company, who took part in it.

"On leaving the trenches we marched to HALLOY, which is 10 or 12 miles West from BIENVILLERS." (Major Lister was in command, as Colonel Fawcus was away ill in hospital.) "We had barely settled down in billets, and found a training ground on which to practise the attack, at HALLOY, when, on the evening of the 9th, we received orders that we were to march to SOUASTRE the next day. That evening (March 10th) at SOUASTRE, Major Lister called a meeting of Company Commanders and Seconds-in-command, and we were told that the Battalion was to attack on the night of the 13th/14th. Very few details, however, were known then; but we were told that only two Company Commanders, and two Seconds-in-command should go in." (The names to be settled by drawing lots.) "After the meeting, whilst we were walking back to our billets, we suddenly missed Wedgwood, and, guessing that he had slipped back again to the Headquarters Mess, we all went back, and found him there, just volunteering to take his Company without drawing lots. We all immediately volunteered also, so that things were just on the same footing as before, and lots had to be drawn.

"About 12-30 that night (10th) further details came through from Brigade, and there was another meeting immediately. We were to attack the BUCQUOY GRABEN, which ran North from the town of BUCQUOY, towards ESSARTS. The BUCQUOY GRABEN consisted of two lines of trenches, which were not more than 100 yards apart, and very heavily wired, with two bands. On observing the trenches from the Eastern edge of BIETZ WOOD, they seemed to be right on the sky line, the ground rising fairly steeply towards it, but, as a



NOT TO SCALE

Not to scale



matter of fact, there is higher ground about 800 yards further behind, called HILL 155, not visible from the Wood.

"Our Battalion had the extreme left flank of the attack against the BUCQUOY GRABEN. On and about March 1st, the Boche had gone back out of GOMMECOURT on to his new Line in front of ESSARTS and BUCQUOY; but he was still in MONCHY."

The ground evacuated was held by outposts, and there were not the usual lines of trenches, and in March 13th it was held by the Notts. and Derby Brigade. The remaining two Brigades of the Division were behind. "The original scheme for the attack was that the 5th North and 5th South Staffs. were to capture the first Line, and then the 6th North and 6th South Staffs. were to pass through and take the high ground further East. The Leicesters were to exploit any success, and the Lincolns were to provide our Battalion with 'mopping-up' and carrying parties. As there were no trenches to jump off from, or assemble in, the Royal Engineers were to lay out a line marked by tapes, from which the attack was to start. At the second officers' meeting on the 10th lots were drawn, with the result that Keeling was to command 'A' Company, Goss 'B' Company, Hammersley 'C' Company, and Wilton 'D' Company. On the 11th (Sunday) Colonel Fawcus came back and resumed command. The Artillery were busy cutting the wire on the 11th, when the four of us went up to BIETZ WOOD to reconnoitre. We got a very good view of the ground from the edge of the wood, having to crawl on our hands and knees to do so.

"The few days previous to the attack were very busy ones for everybody, as there was so much to arrange in such a very short time. The ground was marked out with flags, and we practised the men over it three times. On the 12th we were told that the show was postponed for 24 hours, and would not take place until the night of the 14th/15th, so that we imagined we had an extra day in which to complete all our arrangements and instruct the N.C.O.s.

"The order of our Companies for the attack was 'A' on the right, 'C' in the centre, 'D' on the left. These three Companies were to go over the first line of BUCQUOY GRABEN, and afterwards into the second line, which they were to hold. Two platoons of 'B' Company were to remain with the C.O. as reserve, whilst the other two platoons were to be on the left to defend 'D' Company's flank. It was also arranged that each Company should have some R.E. men to carry ammonal tubes for blowing gaps through the wire if required.

"On the 14th, about noon, we got orders that the attack would take place that night, and that we were to be in position on the tape by 11 p.m. It was now decided that instead of a creeping barrage there should be an intense bombardment from Zero till plus 15, when it would lift to the second line, and at plus 23 it would lift off the second line." It should be explained, perhaps, that all attacks are planned to start at an unknown time, called 'Zero,' to

secure secrecy. It is only shortly before the time of the attack that Zero is known, and then other plus minutes are added to the time.

"The Boche Line was about 500 yards from the tape. We marched from SOUASTRE at 6 p.m. on the 14th. The cookers had been sent on in advance to ROSENDAL (or ROSSIGNOL) WOOD (S.-E. of GOMMECOURT), where we were to halt and have tea. As we marched through FONQUEVILLERS, the main street was being shelled, but we did not have many casualties. When we got up to ROSENDAL WOOD we halted in the open ground in front of the N.-E. corner of the wood. The cookers had got stuck, and the tea had to be carried a good distance. There was no rum in it, I might say; but in spite of this we were all in very high spirits. Up to this time we did not know what time Zero was to be; but about 11 o'clock we got orders that Zero was one o'clock, and we were to be in position by 12-30.

"We were all in position on the tape about 12-45, and the night was favourable, with just one or two stars showing, though fairly dark. At Zero (1 a.m.) we advanced at a steady walk, and got very little opposition, until we were getting close to the ESSARTS-BUCQUOY road. Once or twice as I glanced round at the two waves of men following, I saw one or two shells drop short in amongst them, but on the whole the Artillery was extremely good. As we approached the road Machine-guns and rifle fire began to rip out, and the Boche was sending up all sorts of flares and rockets, and firing Verrey Lights frantically, sideways, frontways, backwards, and along the ground. It was a grand sight to see the men coming on steadily in line, here and there three or four dropping together, caught by Machine-gun bullets or shells; but still the line moved steadily forward all the time to programme, and just as though they had done it every day for years.

"We got into the first belt of wire, and the place where I struck it was very thick, and I had the Devil's own job to pull myself through it, tearing my puttees and trousers to ribbons. I think the men who were immediately close to me got stuck and shot in the wire, but I got through. Seven or eight men who had come up on the right appeared to find an easy gap just about 12 yards from where I got through. We rushed on through the second band of wire, which was well cut, and gave us no trouble, and then with a yell into the Boche trench. Four or five Boches went away like rabbits to the right.

"I found I was in a very deep and well-made trench. Six men jumped into the bay just on my right. There were no Boches in either bay, but we saw them moving along the top of the parados on either flank. Just about 15 yards away, on my left, was a Machine-gun, firing at our men from the parapet, and worked by two men, as we could see distinctly. I left two men to guard our right, and went along the trench with the other four, to the left, to silence the Machine-gun. We had only got into the next bay when a shell burst right in amongst us. For half a minute I was dazed, but I soon pulled myself together, and dressed my wound in my right hand with my field dressing



LIEUT. T. B. GOSSLING.



LIEUT. A. H. B. GREENE.



LIEUT. J. W. GREEVES.



LIEUT. S. A. GRIMWADE.



LIEUT. B. HALFPENNY.



LIEUT. A. G. HAMMERSLEY.



LIEUT. R. S. HAMMERSLEY.



LIEUT. V. S. HAMMERSLEY.



LIEUT. H. HARBAGE.



LIEUT. J. W. A. HARKE.



LIEUT. W. I. HARPER, M.C.



LIEUT. L. H. HARRISON.



LIEUT. S. J. HAWTHORN.



LIEUT. F. S. HEATH.



LIEUT. J. L. HEATH.



LIEUT. R. HEATON.

as well as I could. The four men who were with me were all huddled in the bottom of the trench; two were killed, and the other two badly hit, and unconscious.

"Eight or nine more shells had meanwhile dropped in the trench near us, and one of these seems to have hit the Machine-gun, as it had stopped firing. Immediately afterwards one of us saw six Boches on the left, walking quickly away towards their support line, and the remaining two of my men fired at them. Taking the bombs from the killed and wounded men, we went along the trench to the right, to see if we could find any more of our men. We came to a dug-out entrance in the parapet, and the men threw down some bombs. Then we passed on, and came to another entrance, where some Germans came out shouting 'Kamerad!' I told the two men to let two of them up, and three came up without rifles, and with their hands up. Some more men were on the steps, which were very steep and deep, and the men threw down another bomb, whilst I fired at them with my revolver with my left hand.

"Just then Captain Wilton came up from the right, all by himself, and had not seen any of his men. We saw a Boche walking along the top, behind the parapet, and he called out 'Hendrik,' and said something in German. He was just above our heads, and Captain Wilton fired two or three shots at him, almost as soon as he opened his mouth. We then went along to our right, and found three of Captain Wilton's men, and one lying in the bottom of the trench dying, and we also found his bag of bombs.

"Bombs began to burst round about us, and we found that they came over from the right. We crawled along in front of the trench, and, much to our relief, we found they were being thrown by some of our own men, and, on giving the pass word, they stopped throwing; they were men of 'D' Company. Captain Wilton then sent a runner to Headquarters to say that we were in the trenches, but had not enough men to take the second line, and to ask for the two support platoons.

"I then started to go along to the left, where some of our men had seen some of the Germans come over on the right from the second line; they fired at them, and they disappeared. Several more groups of Boches were seen in threes and fours, but they soon retired when we fired at them. In the next bay, to the left, I found our men had taken three or four prisoners, who had evidently been sent out to make a little counter-attack, and they had each from twenty to thirty egg-bombs in their pockets. I went further along to the left, and found some more men of 'B' Company, and made the necessary arrangements for holding the trench. I then walked back again to find Captain Wilton. By this time there were quite a number of men in the trench, who had most of them been held up in the wire, but very few of them belonged to 'D' Company. Captain Wilton sent me back to Headquarters to bring up the two Reserve



platoons of my Company, and I went with a wounded corporal and three of the prisoners.

"We soon found the Headquarters, though I was very nearly shot by the Sergeant-Major, who mistook me for a Boche, as, having lost my own, I was wearing a German helmet; he had his revolver right in my ribs before he found out his mistake.

"The Commanding Officer did not know where the two Reserve platoons were, and had had no communication with Brigade Headquarters. At that moment Keeling and Cliff came in, and reported that 'A' and 'C' Companies had not been able to get through the wire, and were holding the BUCQUOY-ESSARTS Road. One of the South Staffordshire officers also reported that their attack had failed on our right. I was then ordered to go to Brigade Headquarters (in ROSENDAL WOOD) and report what had happened, and ask for reinforcements. On arriving there I gave my message to the Brigadier and was seen by the Medical Officer, who dressed my wounds, and would not allow me to return."

It will be seen, from this detailed account, what was the general situation. Unfortunately the attack had failed entirely on the right. The wire was very strong, and had not been properly cut. The 5th S. Staffs. on the right had failed, and so had the two right Companies of the 5th North. "D" Company, on the left, under Captain Wilton, had partly forced their way through, as had also the two Platoons of "B" Company on the left. Captain WILTON, for nearly an hour, although wounded in the stomach, made a most gallant effort to hold the line, but, exposed as he was on the right flank, he and his men were overwhelmed. They must have fought to the last, as, two days later, when the Germans retired, he was found dead surrounded by many of his gallant men. For his bravery, on this and other occasions, he was posthumously awarded the M.C. Lieutenant G. E. E. Williams, who was with him, was made prisoner.

It was no fault of the Battalions that the attack had failed. The barbed wire had not been sufficiently cut by the Artillery, and the Germans were ready. The battle, too, was fought on a pitch-black night, pouring with rain, and the men, after a five hours' march, had to advance over shell-craters and disused trenches full of mud and water.

Lieutenant Mate was in charge of the two platoons of "B" Company on the extreme left, and gave the following description of his share in the battle.

"The attack was well timed. I was the last platoon to be lined up on the tape, for I was on the extreme left of the Battalion. I had only been there two minutes when I received the order to advance, and I was able to reach my objective and consolidate my position. A greater resistance, however, was offered on the right, and the wire entanglements there also provided a great difficulty. The German lines were penetrated at several points, but eventually the enemy was able to regain the trenches by a strong counter-attack. I was



able to hold out in my own little sector, and was relieved next day, everybody wet through, and looking like mudlarks."

Sergeant F. FOSTER was one of this party, and, although wounded, he rallied his men together and repeatedly resisted the enemy bombing attacks, until his supply of bombs had run out, and he was ordered to withdraw. For his gallantry he was awarded the Military Medal.

The casualties had been very heavy. Captains S. B. WILTON and A. F. WEDGWOOD, and Lieutenants A. G. HAMMERSLEY, T. E. LEWTY, D. H. KRAUSS, and G. H. TORTOISESHELL had been killed. Lieutenant G. E. E. Williams was a prisoner, and four officers had been wounded.

Captain WEDGWOOD, although his name had not been drawn in the ballot, had obtained permission to lead his Company. When he found his men checked by the wire, he had tried to cut his way through with a wire-cutter, and had then been shot dead. Lieutenant LEWTY was trying to bomb an enemy Machine-gun, which was holding up the attack, when he too was killed. Lieutenant A. G. HAMMERSLEY was found dead a few yards away, surrounded by a dozen of his men. They had succeeded in getting through the two belts of Boche wire, when they were caught by the same Machine-gun, only a few yards from the enemy trench. The losses amongst the men were 28 killed, 22 missing, and 100 wounded. The best tribute that can be given is that of an officer who wrote, "The behaviour of the men was splendid, and a glorious sight, from the point of view of devotion and discipline, was to see small clusters of dead around each fallen officer, when we went to the battle-field later on."

Another officer, not of the Battalion, but one who knew well many of the men and officers, and himself came from North Staffordshire, wrote:—"It was a gallant attack, and the Divisional Staff told me that the North Staffords would have got through if anyone could. Captain Wedgwood died facing the enemy, and cheering his men on, and no soldier would have wished for a nobler death. They buried him along with six other officers in a little cemetery two miles away. It lies in a hollow, and beside a country road, with a tree or two near by, and a wood not far away, past which he had marched the evening before with his men. The wood has a name, ROSSIGNOL (Nightingale) WOOD, which he may have thought of with pleasure, as he sat there that night taking his last meal before the attack; and, though the trees are splintered and smashed, it will be green enough in the spring, and be a shelter to the little graveyard in that desolate country."

Two days after the battle the Germans retired from BUCQUOY, and on March 18th the Battalion occupied the enemy quarters at GOMMECOURT, where they remained for nearly a week. This gave them a chance of examining the German system of defence, and all were very much impressed by it. "Everything pointed to German thoroughness; the wire entanglements were absolute eye-openers, for in many places his wires were quite a hundred yards from his

front lines, and were put out in a series of belts quite thirty yards in depth. They were almost impossible to get through in broad daylight.

"The Boche can give us points in building dug-outs. My Company is billeted in three or four, and they all have beds. I think we can get 50 men into one dug-out."

During these days the Battalion was kept busy on mending the roads which had been broken up by the retiring Germans, and also in collecting salvage. It was apparent that the Germans had been hard up for copper as here and there could be seen small heaps of British used shells, and all the copper had been removed.

When at GOMMECOURT the officers and men went over the old battlefield. They found the bodies of many old comrades, including Colonel Boote, and Lieut. Mellard, and also two officers of the 1st/6th North Staffs., Lieuts. Shaw and Newton, all killed July 1st, 1916. They were buried where they were found, and crosses put over their graves.

A few days later the Division left the Line and went on the move. They had the usual life in billets, with periods of training to remind them of the War. They passed near AMIENS, and on April 12th arrived at BETHUNE, and finally on May 1st took over from the 24th Division the trenches opposite LENS. The 1st/5th on that day moved to LIEVIN, and were billeted in cellars in the CITE ST. THEODORE. On May 7th they underwent a terrible gas bombardment, over 8,000 gas-shells being fired, and two officers and 40 men were gassed.

An officer, Lieut. A. T. Scrivener, wrote home about this date, "We are classed as an A1 Division for our work of the last few weeks, and as such we expect to get it thick!" This was the same fearless officer who, on one occasion, carried a wounded man, Pte. J. Simcock, on his back, from No Man's Land into safety. Another time, when a private, he was held back with difficulty from going to the rescue of a comrade whom one or two had already tried to reach, having been shot in the daring attempt.

While the German Line was falling back to its new positions in the South Sir Douglas Haig had been preparing for a new blow in the North. This blow was to be aimed at the German position between LENS on the North and ARRAS on the South. Five Corps had been collected for this attack, the three Southern ones belonging to Allenby's Third Army, and the Northern two to Horne's First Army. The Corps on the extreme North opposite LENS was the 1st Corps, and consisted of the 6th, 24th and 46th Divisions, under the command of General Holland. Next to them, on their right, was the Canadian Division facing the VIMY Ridge. After a preliminary bombardment, the attack took place at 5.30 a.m. on April 9th. It was aimed at a definite objective, which was the ridge occupied by the enemy, the most important point of which was the VIMY Ridge. The attack was generally successful on the



LIEUT. C. E. HEDGE, M.C.



LIEUT. J. L. HIGGINBOTHAM.



LIEUT. A. H. S. HINCHLIFFE.



LIEUT. B. R. HIPKINS.



LIEUT. H. T. HOBSON.



LIEUT. L. C. HOLMAN.



LIEUT. C. F. HOLTOM.



LIEUT. T. H. HORSPOOL, M.C.

PLATE XXVIII.



LIEUT. H. HOUGH.



LIEUT. J. B. HOVELL.



LIEUT. A. HOWARD.



LIEUT. G. B. HOWSON.



LIEUT. A. H. HUGHES.



LIEUT. J. H. HUGHES.



LIEUT. W. H. HULME.



LIEUT. G. M. HUMPHRY.



first day, and the Canadian Division not only stormed the Ridge, but made their way down the Eastern slope and established their line beyond it.

After the first day the German defence began to stiffen, and the subsequent fighting consisted of continuous attacks and counter-attacks by both sides, to improve their positions. The 46th Division, which had just arrived in the district, was in reserve during this fighting, though the 1st Corps to which it belonged took a subsidiary share in the attack on April 9th. On April 10th the Canadian 4th Division captured HILL 145. On April 12th the Canadians made a further attack, and captured, amongst other points, the little hill called The Pimple. The 24th Division shared in this attack, and moved forward towards LENS, being separated on the South from the Canadians by the River SOUCHEZ. After heavy losses they won their objective. On the next day this same Division, aided by the 6th Division on their left, and with the 46th in reserve, attacked upon a three Brigade Front, with complete success, and stormed and occupied ANGRES, and the CITE ST. PIERRE. On the 16th of April the 46th Division relieved the 24th Division, and held the Line from the SOUCHEZ River in the South to FOSSE (Pit) 12 DE LENS in the North. The 24th Division had lost 3,000 men in these operations, but their services had been of great value, preventing the Germans from attempting to retake the positions which they had lost.

LENS is (or was) a mining town surrounded by coal-pits, with villages with rows of miners' cottages, known as "Cités." The dumps and villages here made the fighting most difficult, and the 46th Division, during their occupation of this part of the Line, had many experiences of street fighting. The Germans had begun to burn and destroy as much as they could, and there were dense columns of dark smoke. Their retreat had been so precipitate that candles were found burning in the dug-outs, meals were half consumed, and large stores of engineering materials and grenades were left behind. The result of the Battle of ARRAS had been a considerable victory for the British. They had advanced their Line from three to six miles along the whole front; taking, what is more, all the high ground, and they had captured 14,000 men and 180 guns. On the 16th of April the French had commenced their great offensive upon the AISNE, and Sir Douglas Haig, to help them, continued to keep up his pressure in the North, and there was considerable fighting also along the ARRAS front.

On May 24th the operations at LENS, which had been in abeyance since April 23rd, broke out once more. The 46th Division, which had extended its left so as to occupy much of the ground formerly held by the 6th Division, made an attempt upon Nash Alley, and other trenches in front of it. The attack was made by the 137th Stafford Brigade, the 5th N. Staffs. being in reserve, and it was launched at seven in the evening. The objectives were easily secured, and 28 prisoners were taken. However, it was found impossible to hold the captured ground. Every German gun within range was turned

upon it, and there were furious counter-attacks. Captain MACGOWAN beat off five of these onslaughts, before he was blown to pieces by a bomb. Major MACNAMARA came from Headquarters to take command, and in the morning withdrew the detachment, an operation which was performed with great steadiness, the men facing back, and firing as they retired. Unfortunately he himself was killed in conducting the movement. The 5th North Staffs. were not in the actual fighting, but the 6th North were, and lost some prisoners, one of whom described what happened. "We went over at 7 o'clock at night, and got into the enemy trenches without losing any men. When we got into his front Line the enemy were running about like mad. After we had settled down they made an attack on us, but we held them back until 11 o'clock the next day, when we were overwhelmed by a terrible bombardment, and the trenches taken. I got wounded with the shelling, and, as I could not get back, was taken prisoner."

Between these attacks there was the usual trench warfare, with incessant patrols and skirmishing, in which the 5th North Staffs. got their fair share. On May 10th Lieutenant BUTTERFIELD was killed. He was passing through a wire entanglement on patrol, when there was a small explosion. It was evidently a trap, as immediately the Germans attacked with light Machine-guns, and drove off the patrol.

The Battle of ARRAS had given the British possession of the Ridge to the East as far as LENS, but this Ridge continues further North in the direction of YPRES, and the next attack was to be aimed at this. The principal part of this Ridge is known as the MESSINES RIDGE, which the 5th N. Staffs. got to know so well in 1915, when they were first in the trenches at WULVERGHEM. The Second Army, under General Plumer, was chosen for this work, and had been moved down South, and Gough's Fifth Army, to which the 59th Division belonged, was being sent North to occupy the YPRES salient. Preparatory to the attack some twenty great mines had been driven into the hills containing over a million pounds of ammonal, and there had been an enormous accumulation of guns. From the last days of May a pitiless bombardment had assailed the enemy area, and the last remnants of WYTSCAETE and MESSINES villages had disappeared.

At 3-10 a.m. on June 7th the mines were exploded with a noise that could be heard for miles, and at the same moment every British gun opened on the enemy. The attack was most successful. The Southern part of the Ridge was stormed by the Australians and New Zealanders, and the Northern part by the Ulster Division, attacking from the trenches at WULVERGHEM, and aided by the 16th (South Ireland) Division. German counter-attacks failed, and the whole of the Ridge, including HILL 60, near YPRES, was in the British possession, and also 7,200 prisoners, 67 guns, 294 Machine-guns, and 94 trench mortars.



The three Divisions of the 1st Corps and the Canadians had not shared in these operations, but had been occupying the Germans by gradually working up each side of the SOUCHEZ River, until they began to threaten LENS itself. The Germans, recognizing the danger, had already blown up a number of their depôts, and practically destroyed everything on the surface. Another raid had been made on June 8th by the 138th Brigade, the work being done by the 4th Lincolns and 5th Leicesters. They had attracted the enemy's attention by using dummy figures, some 400 of which were manipulated by wires, so as to have the appearance of men making an attack. In the meantime the front trenches were rushed at another place. Twenty prisoners were captured, and heavy casualties inflicted, but the two Battalions lost over 300 men.

On the 14th of June it was the turn of the 5th North Staffs. to make a raid at CITE ST. LAURENT. The raid was to be made by two parties chosen from "A" and "C" Companies, and was composed of eight officers and 160 men. The object of the raid was to obtain identifications, and kill as many of the enemy as possible. The two Companies were withdrawn from the Line for a few days for a period of training, and on the 13th were brought up to cellars in the Line. Whilst in these cellars there was an unfortunate accident to some of "A" Company. A party of men were having tea in a cellar when one of the bombers, who was examining the bombs, detonated one of them. He rushed up the steps with it, but could not get away before it exploded and killed two men, and wounded 11 others.

The raid was preceded by the usual bombardment, and the two Companies advanced across No Man's Land. "A" Company was on the right, and was commanded by Captain Rayner, and "C" Company on the left, commanded by Lieutenant (Acting-Captain) Masfield. "A" Company, on reaching the gap in the wire, were heavily bombed, and only a few men reached the enemy's parapet, and were driven back. Captain Rayner rallied the men, and was making another attack, when he was struck by a bomb, and, in spite of the efforts of the other officers, the Company had to give way and return without entering the enemy's trenches. "C" Company, on the left, met a party of twelve Germans lying outside their wire, and fired at them, hitting one or two. The rest of them fled into their own wire, and were caught by the barrage and apparently killed. One of the two gaps had been well cut, but, as the other was still complete, two men, Privates James SARGEANT and Herbert SWAIN, carried forward an ammonal tube, and, in spite of the enemy, who had seen and bombed them, succeeded in firing the tube and making a gap. For their courage they were awarded the Military Medal. The Company then rushed through the two gaps and entered the trenches. Lieutenant Basil Green pushed on to the second objective, and, having put out a covering party, examined the dug-outs and cellars, inflicting heavy casualties. The second wave, under Lieutenant Masfield, cleared the trenches and dug-outs. They had a considerable amount

of fighting. Sergeant J. T. GATER, who was on the left flank, drove off a strong bombing counter-attack and held the position against superior numbers until the completion of the raid. Private C. H. BIRD was foremost in attacking the dug-outs, and made three prisoners. Lieutenant MASEFIELD attacked a party of Germans, and killed two of them himself at close quarters. During this raid communication between the raid party and Headquarters was kept up by telephone. This could not have been done if Private S. J. CLARKE had not mended the wires which were broken, in spite of heavy Trench-Mortar fire and shelling. To do this he was out in the open for over an hour. For their bravery these three men were awarded the Military Medal.

When the time allowed for the raid was over Lieutenant Masefield successfully withdrew his Company. The result of this raid was that about 50 Germans were killed, and three made prisoners. The Battalion lost three officers, Captain RAYNER (just out from England), and Lieutenants CLIFF and H. E. SMITH; and 13 men were killed or missing, and 37 wounded. After the raid Lieutenant B. GREEN went back to No Man's Land with one man, and spent over an hour searching for wounded near the enemy's wire. For their gallantry on this raid Lieutenants MASEFIELD and GREEN received the Military Cross.

On June 19th the 138th Brigade, in conjunction with the Canadians, took and consolidated the trenches in front of them. Unfortunately, owing to some mistake, some of the British gas projectors fell in one of these trenches, and almost exterminated a Company of the 5th Leicesters.

The 46th Division and the Canadians gave the Germans no rest, and the threat to LENS caused the Germans to bring up further reinforcements. None the less the attacks continued, and on June 25th the 5th South Staffs. and 6th North Staffs. and some Canadian Battalions, drove the Germans off HILL 65; and on June 28th a further advance was made by the 137th and 138th Brigades. Two days later the 6th North Staffs. and 7th Sherwood Foresters made yet another advance, though with some loss, especially in the case of the Sherwood Foresters. The 5th North Staffs., who had been in support, on June 30th relieved the 6th North and 5th South Staffs.

The 46th Division had now been in the LENS sector for ten weeks, and had during that time been continually raiding or attacking the enemy. It was very difficult fighting, as the trenches ran amongst ruined streets and houses. It was by no means an enjoyable experience, as they worked in areas where they never knew where the enemy might turn up next. He had always the advantage, as he knew the ground and could always lay traps for the unwary. Even when a Battalion was being relieved, it was not difficult to get lost, owing to the complications of the relief routes.

One of the most important parts of the fighting was the patrolling. Nearly every night patrols were sent out, and these had many adventures. On June 4th Lieutenant L. Staniforth was out on patrol with two sections of "B" Company,



LIEUT. F. T. JACKS.



LIEUT. F. W. JAMES.



LIEUT. H. H. JARRETT.



LIEUT. J. JARVIS.



LIEUT. D. G. JEFFCOTT.



LIEUT. A. J. JENKINSON.



LIEUT. R. F. JOHNSON.



LIEUT. R. JOHNSON.

PLATE XXX.



LIEUT. W. JOHNSON.



LIEUT. C. C. JOLLIFFE.



LIEUT. A. M. JONES



LIEUT. D. G. J. JONES.



LIEUT. L. H. JONES.



LIEUT. F. KENT.



LIEUT. W. W. KILWORTH.



LIEUT. T. W. KNOWLES.

when he observed a party of Germans putting out wire near a road. At the same time two more Germans were seen coming along a railway embankment. An effort was made to cut these two men off, but they escaped and gave the alarm. The enemy then opened rapid fire, and the patrol retired. Lieutenants J. E. Lowe, E. S. Moss, and R. C. Mate made several daring patrols, and were congratulated by the G.O.C. the Division on their good work.

All this fighting had begun to tell upon the enemy. The continuous raids and attacks had resulted in the capture of many prisoners, and from these prisoners it was evident that the Germans (the 93rd Regiment of Pomeranians) in this part of the Line were beginning to be demoralised. The easy capture of HILL 65, and other small successes of the last week of June, seemed to confirm this opinion, and the Higher Command considered that the German Division occupying these positions was so demoralised that there was a possibility of capturing LENS.

LENS was a very formidable position, as the numerous houses made excellent defences, and a few troops would be able to hold back an attack. If, however, the defenders were sufficiently demoralised, a sudden blow might prove successful. It was evident that the Germans had begun to realise the danger, and would strengthen the defences. The attack then must be made at once, before the worn-out German Division was relieved.

It was decided to make this attempt on the morning of the 1st of July (a disastrous anniversary for the 46th Division). The attack was to be made on a three Brigade front, the objective being from the SOUCHEZ River in the South, through "Aconite" and "Aloof" Trenches, to the junction point of the Sixth Division, North-West of LENS. The 139th (Sherwoods) Brigade was on the left, in the centre the 137th (Staffords), and on the right the 138th (Lincolns and Leicesters). The Higher Command admitted to the Brigade that the attack was a gamble, its success depending on whether the worn-out German Division had been relieved or not.

The 137th Brigade was organised as follows. The 5th North Staffs. were detailed to lead the attack, and the 6th South Staffs. were to supply "mopping up" parties and local reserves. The 6th North Staffs. and 5th South Staffs. were in reserve. All the Battalions were very weak in numbers, owing to the constant fighting. Each man of the 5th North Staffs. carried 150 rounds of ammunition, two days' rations, and two bombs. The Bombers carried eight bombs, and the Rifle Grenadiers six rifle grenades. The strength of the Companies was so small that it was decided to have only two platoons per Company. The attack was to be made on a four-Company front, each Company attacking in two waves. "B" Company was on the left, commanded by 2nd Lieut. A. W. Boulton, with 2nd Lieuts. R. P. Bolton and Cockayne; next came "A" Company, commanded by 2nd Lieut. P. B. Ross, with 2nd Lieuts. Moss and A. M. Jones; next "C" Company, commanded by 2nd Lieut. Masefield, with 2nd Lieuts. B. Green and R. F. Johnson; and, on the extreme right,



"D" Company, commanded by 2nd Lieut. Scrivener, with 2nd Lieuts. Lowe and Greeves. It will be seen that all the Company officers were Lieutenants, though Lieuts. Scrivener and Masefield had the acting rank of Captain. Lieut. Krell was Adjutant, and 2nd Lieut. Cowlishaw, Signal Officer.

The front of attack was about 400 yards. A Cyclist Battalion and some Cavalry had dug the assault trench, and a tape had been put out 50 yards in front of it, though it had not been completed. The two waves assembled in two rows of trenches at 2 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, July 1st.



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#### No. IV. LENS AND SUBURBS.

The CITE DU MOULIN, which was to be attacked, had originally been a Western suburb of LENS. It consisted of four streets, with houses on both sides, all leading in the direction of the attack. The two central streets led into a small square with a Church in the centre. The houses were in a semi-state of collapse, some were almost intact, and some had only a portion of the walls standing. The German first trench lay inside the town, and was



heavily wired. This wire had been cut by the Artillery on the previous days, and repairs had been prevented, by firing shrapnel at night. The attack was to be assisted by a creeping barrage, which was to lift 100 yards every three minutes, and a "Box" barrage was to enclose the objectives to prevent reinforcements and counter-attacks. The assault was fixed for 2-43 a.m., just before dawn.

The attack at first progressed favourably, and the men passed through the wire into the streets. On the left the Germans had some Machine-guns which they had rushed through the barrage, and these held up "A" and "B" Companies, so that they could not reach their objective. "C" and "D" Companies on the right had much less opposition, and, pushing down the streets, reached their objective, the "Aconite" Trench, leaving the 6th South Staffs. to mop up the Germans in the houses. On reaching their objective they worked along to their left, hoping to meet "A" Company, and consolidated their position.

Meanwhile upon the extreme left the Sherwood Brigade, with a 2nd Battalion of their own Regiment, advanced upon the LENS-LIEVIN Road. It was an ideal ground for defence, with houses, slag-heaps, and other obstacles, and, in spite of their efforts, they could not reach their objective. On the right the Lincolns and Leicester Brigade had been more successful, but had not been able to gain their full objective. The result of all this fighting was that "C" and "D" Companies, who had reached their objectives, and sent a last message to say they were consolidated, were being cut off. The remainder of the 5th North Staffs. made most desperate but unavailing attempts to get through, and the fighting was most severe, being hand to hand in streets and houses. Captain Wenger took charge of one of these attempts, and was very successful, taking several houses and capturing the Church. They also took 17 prisoners and three Machine-guns. Captain Wenger was then wounded, and the Germans, counter-attacking, retook the Church. Major GRAHAM then took charge, and, in an attempt to recover the positions, was killed, and then Lieut. Noke took command until he was wounded. No North Staffordshire officer was now left, and a South Staffordshire officer took command. Reinforcements were sent up by the 6th North Staffs. and the 5th South Staffs., but, suffering heavy casualties, they could effect nothing. Finally, at 7 p.m., the attempt to relieve the two Companies was abandoned, and the relics of the Battalion were withdrawn. The attack had been a failure, and, as the enemy had fought skilfully and with courage, they were probably a fresh Division. The total casualties of the 46th Division were 50 officers and 1,000 men.

Later on the fate of "C" and "D" Companies was learned from the survivors, who had been made prisoners. When they found they were surrounded they fought as long as they had ammunition, but their position was hopeless, scattered as they were amongst ruined houses. Of the six officers in these two Companies, Lieut. R. F. Johnson, who was taken prisoner, was the only survivor. Lieuts. A. T. SCRIVENER, C. J. B. MASEFIELD, B. GREEN, J. E.

LOWE, and J. W. GREEVES were all killed. Other officers killed were Major GRAHAM, and Lieuts. E. S. MOSS and A. E. COCKAYNE, making a total of eight killed. In addition Captain F. E. Wenger, and Lieuts. C. J. Noke, A. W. Boulton, S. K. Cope, R. P. Bolton, H. R. A. Garnett, and A. M. Jones were wounded; and Lieut. P. B. Ross was also taken prisoner.

One of the men, who was made a prisoner of war, gave further details on his return to ENGLAND.

"'C' and 'D' Companies, by a circuitous route from LIEVIN, obtained their objectives, and held some of the houses. We were hopelessly cut off by the enemy, who was fully prepared for a big counter-attack, and a box barrage was thrown round us. Men were falling fast from shot and shell, and from bombs thrown into the houses. Lieutenant J. W. GREEVES called his platoon to follow him to a wrecked trench, where there was a better chance. The men followed him, but, just as he reached the trench, he was mortally wounded in the chest. Another man was also hit, and fell outside the trench, and the dying officer turning round pulled him into the trench. The man was already dead, and Lieutenant Greeves then fell down dead himself."

Captain SCRIVENER was shot when standing near Lieutenant Ross, and Lieutenant Lowe was last seen trying to get back through the enemy wire. Captain MASEFIELD fought heroically, and was severely wounded, and died at LEFOREST, after being taken prisoner. Lieutenant Johnson was taken prisoner when entangled in the German wire, and Lieutenant Ross had a wonderful escape from being killed. Nothing was ascertained about the other officers and men, except that they all put up a most heroic resistance.

When an attack is in progress Headquarters are informed as to what is going on by telephone or messengers, and from the dug-out directions are given and received. The following account, taken from the official diary, will show what was recorded on July 1st at Headquarters.

"The night was intensely dark, and 'Absalom' Trench and the LENS-LIEVIN Road were heavily shelled by the enemy. The Trenches 'Abode,' 'Adult' and 'Ague' had been so destroyed by our artillery fire as to be unrecognisable in the dark. There was heavy rifle and Machine-gun fire from the houses 40 yards West of the tape line, and the North end of 'Ague' Trench, which caused casualties amongst the men acting as guides. Captain Wenger, who remained in the Report Centre, at 1-14 a.m. reported that the right Company was completely lost and down on the left flank. Major Graham was ordered to go forward at once and get this Company into position as quickly as possible. He returned shortly before Zero, and reported that he had succeeded, and that the whole line was in position, with the exception of the left Company, which could not get into 'Ague' Trench, as it was held by the enemy.

"The leading waves of the two right Companies succeeded in reaching their objective, though some parties of the second wave were held up in severe



LIEUT. C. R. KRELL.



LIEUT. G. L. LATHBURY.



LIEUT. W. A. LAWRENCE.



LIEUT. E. B. LEE.



LIEUT. H. LEE.



LIEUT. H. A. LEGG.



LIEUT. T. E. LEWTY.



LIEUT. H. C. LINDOP.

PLATE XXXII.



LIEUT. J. M. LOVATT.



LIEUT. J. E. LOWE, M.C.



LIEUT. T. L. LOWE.



LIEUT. C. A. LOWNDES.



LIEUT. C. E. H. Loxton.



LIEUT. C. C. LYALL.



LIEUT. J. R. MALKIN.



LIEUT. W. MALKIN.



house to house fighting, and did not reach 'Aconite' trench. This was due to the fact that the 'moppers up' had lost their officer and senior N.C.O.s, and the men, instead of clearing the houses, had gone forward with the attacking wave. This wave had gone close to the Church, and, as soon as it had passed, the enemy had come out of the cellars. The left centre Company was held up almost immediately by Machine-gun and rifle fire from the houses close to their starting point. The left Company, after severe fighting, captured 'Ague' Trench, and a small trench about 50 yards in front of it.

"At 3-15 a.m. golden rain rockets went up from 'Aconite,' showing that the objective had been gained. At 4-45 a.m. a written message was brought down by a wounded man, signed by the commanding officers of the two right Companies, 'C' and 'D' (Lieutenants Masefield and Scrivener), saying that they had secured their objective, and pushed out patrols to houses about 100 yards to their front. No news was received for some considerable time as to what had happened to the left Companies." It was later ascertained that this runner was intercepted by Lieut. Ross and Lieut. Lowe, who, with a party of men, went to the assistance of "C" and "D" Companies.

About 7 a.m. Colonel Fawcus realised that the Battalions on each flank had failed to advance, and that the right Companies in 'Aconite' were in a dangerous position. He telephoned to Brigade Headquarters, and asked if these Battalions could not push forward, and if so he would assist with his support Companies. "At about the same time numbers of men were seen firing at each other about 'Cornwall' Trench, and a few minutes later men in this area began to retire. There was no artillery bombardment on either side, and only desultory rifle fire. When the men retired into the open the enemy Machine-guns were turned on them, and many were seen to fall. The enemy followed them into No Man's Land, but afterwards returned to their trenches."

Colonel Fawcus then learned that the two left Companies were disorganised, and engaged in house to house fighting, a short distance in front of 'Ague' Trench, and that all the officers of the left-centre Company had become casualties, and only one remained with the left Company. He then ordered Captain Wenger to go forward to reorganise the Companies, and push forward, get in touch with the Companies on the right, and make a defensive line from the Church on the left flank. "Captain Wenger at once went forward, and succeeded in driving the enemy into the cellars round the Church. Leaving a 'mopping up' party to clear the cellars, he advanced further, and found more cellars full of the enemy. These were driven out, and shot by Lewis Guns as they escaped. He was then wounded, and the command devolved on Lieutenant Jones of the 6th South Staffs. Captain Wenger reported these events on his way back to the aid post.

"At 8-15 a.m. two platoons from the supports were ordered to push out along the houses on each flank, so as to reinforce the posts, and protect their

flanks. The left Company had meanwhile advanced, and met heavy opposition, but when Lieutenant Staniforth (the only officer left on this flank) found that he was being cut off behind, by a large number of the enemy, and was being counter-attacked on his front, he withdrew to 'Ague' Trench.

"At 11-45 Major Graham, who had taken the place of Captain Wenger in the Report Centre, reported that a line of posts had been established in the houses round the Church, and that patrols were trying to get in touch with the right Companies, but no news had been received of these patrols.

"At 1-15 p.m. the enemy began barraging the occupied trenches, and counter-attacked in force on the left and right, and drove in the posts.

"Major Graham was ordered to organise and reinstate the line of posts. This counter-attack was launched at 3-30 p.m., but failed, as the enemy brought up considerable forces and several Machine-guns. The line made two efforts to get forward, but were driven back each time, and on the last occasion Major GRAHAM was lost. All ranks fought with the greatest determination, and a large number of the enemy were killed. After so many officers became casualties the attack was carried on by the N.C.O.s, and in many cases Lance-Corporals took forward their part of the line with great dash. A series of house to house fighting continued for the rest of the day. The barrage had been put down too far from the starting point, and so the enemy posts, in the houses between their line and the starting post, were able to hold up at the beginning of the attack."

There are some inconsistencies between these accounts, but this is always the case in a battle.

Amongst many acts of courage were the following:—

Sergeant W. A. HAYES made a great effort to silence one of the Machine-guns, and got within 15 yards of it before being driven back. Afterwards he captured a sniper, and with a party of men captured eight prisoners and three Machine-guns in a cellar. Private WILLIAM BAILEY attacked a party of snipers, and killed three of them himself. Private A. E. WORTHINGTON worked as a stretcher-bearer, and, after being wounded and unable to carry a stretcher, he refused to retire, and carried men down on his back, compelling prisoners where possible to assist him. Lance-Corporal J. H. WEBB was with a group of men which was cut off from the rest of the Company, but they cut their way through, and back to the trench. He reorganised again, and for the third time attacked, and was able to assist in driving some of the enemy into a cellar, where they were captured or killed. In the evening he again advanced with a party under an officer, and, when the officer was killed, again assumed command. Private J. T. ALLMAN, when the enemy heavily counter-attacked in the afternoon, kept his Lewis Gun in action in the open for a considerable time. He drew upon himself the fire of a large number of snipers, but kept in action until his gun jammed. He was then wounded in the leg, but brought his gun safely back. Lance-Corporal G. C. WAIN in the early morning collected a



party of stragglers, and cleared a row of houses and cellars, driving the enemy out into the fire of Lewis Guns. Afterwards he twice went forward with patrols to try and get into touch with the Companies, who were cut off in "Aconite" Trench. Later in the afternoon he controlled covering fire for a counter-attack, and greatly assisted in keeping the men together throughout the attack. All these six men for their bravery were given the Military Medal.

This hard-fought action concluded the services of the 46th Division in this portion of the front. It had been in the Line for ten weeks, and under constant fire for the greater part of that time. The strength of the Battalions had been so reduced by constant losses, that none of them could muster more than 300 men. On July 2nd they handed over their line to the Second Canadian Division, and retired for a well-earned rest, and to refit and make up their strength.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE 2nd/5th, FROM JULY, 1917, TO THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI,  
NOVEMBER 30th, 1917.

ON April 30th, 1917, the 5th (Reserve) North Staffs. left their winter quarters at LINCOLN, and came to MABLETHORPE, on the LINCOLNSHIRE Coast. Here they formed part of the LINCOLNSHIRE Coast Defence. Their camp was in a field near the Railway Station, and they also occupied several buildings in the town as offices and stores. Their main function was to supply drafts to the two Battalions in FRANCE, and sometimes to other Units; but they were also responsible for the defence of their sector on the coast, stretching from SUTTON on the South to a short distance North of MABLETHORPE. Trenches and Machine-gun emplacements were made along the shore, and at night there was always a patrol at the "Call Over." This patrol sometimes had a busy time during the holiday months, in driving back—not Germans—but visitors who sought the solitude of the sandhills in the evening.

During the summer the most popular parade was the bathing-parade, and it was a pleasant sight to see the Companies come marching down to the beach and take their morning dip. Colonel Blizzard on "Snowball" was one of the institutions of MABLETHORPE, and the small town, when filled with the men and their families, became a veritable "STOKE-ON-SEA." It was a happy time for those who had come back wounded or sick from FRANCE, and also for the recruits who were preparing for the great adventure.

The result of the early operations of 1917 had been that in April the Germans had been driven off the VIMY RIDGE, and in June off the MESSINES RIDGE, and the whole of the high ground along the British front was in our hands, with the exception of that which dominated YPRES from the North and North-East. It was hoped that, if this ground was captured, not only would YPRES be removed from danger, but the enemy might be forced to abandon BRUGES and the Belgian coast.

There was no secret about these preparations, and the Germans knew what was coming. They had learned at ARRAS and MESSINES that a strong position could be taken, if it had deep trenches, dug-outs, and wire, so they adopted a new system of defence. The continuous trench had been discarded, and instead there were isolated posts, occupying shell-holes and trenches. Scattered about amongst these posts were small concrete forts, held by small garrisons, and known to the Allies as "Pill Boxes." Behind these were the main defences. It was hoped that, by these means, the strength of the attack would be broken before the main defence was reached, and then the counter-attack could be made. Further, the "Pill Boxes" were so scattered, that they could not all be destroyed by artillery fire, as in the case of a single trench.

The new offensive involved a complete redistribution of the allied forces. The Third Army, commanded by Sir Julian Byng, who had succeeded General Allenby, had extended its front South of ARRAS, so as to join the French. This released Sir Herbert Gough's Fifth Army, and Sir Henry Rawlinson's Fourth Army. The Fourth Army took over from the French on the Belgian coast, then came the Belgian Army, then the First French Army, and then, on both sides of YPRES, the Fifth Army. To the right of the Fifth Army was the Second Army, then the First Army extending to ARRAS, and finally the Third Army.

The 59th Division with the 2nd/5th North Staffs. formed part of the Fifth Army, which was chosen to make the attack at YPRES. On August 24th the 2nd/5th left BARASTRE, where they had been in training since July 7th, and, after a short march, went by motor lorries to FORCEVILLE, a small village, North-West of ALBERT. They were not very far from GOMMECOURT, and some of them visited the battlefield of July 1st, 1916. There was an officer with them, who as a private had taken part in the battle, and he described the action to his comrades. At the beginning of September they entrained, and were taken to POPERINGHE, West of YPRES. They then marched West to a camp at WINNEZEELE, on the railway which runs from STEENVOORDE to DUNKIRK. Later they returned to POPERINGHE, and were in Reserve for the fierce fighting which was then taking place at YPRES. (See Map I.)

It is no easy matter to move an Army from one area to another, and the Fifth Army had been moved up by Corps. The first part of the Army had arrived in July, and on Tuesday, July 31st, had made the first attack in the Third Battle of YPRES. During the last week of July the weather had been dull and cloudy, and this had hampered the preliminary bombardment, and on Monday, July 30th, there had been a heavy thunderstorm. At 3-50 a.m. on July 31st, under cover of discharges of thermit and blazing oil, and such a barrage as had not yet been seen, the infantry crossed the parapets, and the battle began. The whole of the German front position fell at once, and over 6,000 prisoners were taken. The next day should have seen a second blow, but rain began to fall heavily, and did not stop for four days and four nights, and the whole operations had to be suspended, as the ground had become a quagmire. No further serious attack was made until August 16th, and this attack, though at first successful, was broken by the "pill boxes," and the Fifth Army suffered terrible losses. To make up for these losses, the front of the Second Army, under Sir Henry Plumer, was extended to the North, so that it might share in the attack. Tactics also were revised, so as to deal with the "pill boxes." The weather in September had slightly improved, and a third attack was fixed for September 20th.

The attack was to be made on a front extending from LANGEMARCK on the North, to a place known as TOWER HAMLETS, South of the MENIN Road.

Two Corps of the Fifth Army (the XVIIIth and Vth) were on the left, and two of the Second Army (the IIInd ANZACS and the Xth) on the right. The Vth Corps, to which the 59th Division belonged, and which was commanded by General Fanshawe, had just relieved the XIXth Corps, which had suffered heavy losses in the preceding fighting. The Vth Corps consisted of the 55th (West Lancashire Territorials), the 9th (Scottish and S. Africans), the 6th, and 59th Divisions, and was on the right of the Fifth Army. The 55th and 9th Divisions were to attack on September 20th, and the other two Divisions were in Reserve. Their sector was between ST. JULIEN on the North and the ROULERS Railway on the South, with ZONNEBEKE as the main objective. At 5-40 a.m. on September 20th the attack was launched. It was largely successful. There was an advance along the whole Line, and 3,000 prisoners were taken. It was the historic spot where the 1st and 2nd Divisions had stopped the German rush in the First Battle of YPRES, nearly three years before.

The Germans on the next and following days made violent counter-attacks with little success. The British had now won all the interior ridges of the Salient, but were not yet in a position to capture the PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE. Before doing this it was necessary to capture ZONNEBEKE and POLYGON WOOD. For this purpose it was decided to make another attack on September 26th. The same Corps were to attack, but the Divisions were changed. In the Vth Corps the 59th Division relieved the 55th on the left, and the 3rd relieved the 9th on the right. The 59th were to advance 1,000 yards along the road to PASSCHENDAELE, and the 3rd were to attack ZONNEBEKE.

The attack commenced at 5-50 a.m. The 59th Division made a fine advance upon the right of the GRAVENSTAFEL Road, keeping touch with the 47th London Division on the left. Almost the whole objective was reached, and 300 prisoners were taken. The German positions, though free from fortified villages, were very thick with every sort of mechanical obstruction, in spite of which the attack went smoothly from start to finish. It is clear that the British advance was fully expected at the South end of the Line, but for some reason, probably the wretched state of the ground, it was not looked for in the North. The advance was to a depth of half a mile. Early in the afternoon the enemy made several counter-attacks, one of which drove back the troops on a narrow front for a short distance. They in their turn counter-attacked, and recovered the position to the right of the 59th Division. The Third Division were also successful, and captured ZONNEBEKE, and beat off the counter-attack. Further South the Vth Australian Corps captured POLYGON WOOD, and the Xth Corps gained some successes, but there the Germans were better prepared, and the British troops suffered heavy losses. The total result of the action was a gain of over half a mile along the whole front, and the capture of 1,600 prisoners.

The *Birmingham Post* correspondent, who had visited the front, gave the following description of the fighting of the Stafford Brigade:—



LIEUT. C. E. MARCHANT.



LIEUT. A. H. MASON.



LIEUT. J. M. MASON.



LIEUT. R. C. MATE, M.C.



LIEUT. F. B. MAYER.



LIEUT. K. W. G. MEAKIN.



LIEUT. W. MEAKIN.



LIEUT. R. B. MELLARD.





LIEUT. P. MELLOR.



LIEUT. C. W. MILLER.



LIEUT. H. W. MORRALL.



LIEUT. E. P. MORRIS.



LIEUT. A. H. MOSS.



LIEUT. E. S. MOSS.



LIEUT. P. H. MOSS.



LIEUT. W. MYERS.



"There came a September morning, when the Staffords took part in a great forward movement, and were in the very front of the attack. They had days of fighting, which the survivors recall with glowing pride, marvelling how any of them came through with it. They went where they were directed to go, and they traversed an INFERNO to get there. To take an objective, however, is one thing; to keep is quite another, especially when the enemy fight well; and never did the Staffords, and many another regiment, know him to fight more skilfully and vigorously than on this occasion. He held on stubbornly against the attack; he fell back skilfully in the nick of time; he counter-attacked with reckless energy to recover what he had lost, sometimes incurring annihilation. Whole parties were blasted out of life by our artillery.

"For the Staffords in the front, with objectives reached, there were hours of uncertainty, for they were ahead of the field telephone wires, laid as troops advance, and the runners they sent back with news were killed. They dug themselves in, as best they could, under a storm of shot. At evening the enemy put down a tremendous barrage upon them, and under cover of it his infantry swooped down towards them, but only to be destroyed by our protective barrage.

"Right through the German barrage, falling behind our front Line, the Staffords in support raced to the aid of their comrades, and there were counter-attacks until the enemy was convinced that he could not recover the ground. Never had the Staffords heard such artillery fire on our side or by the enemy as in these late September days. Not in the history of artillery have such numbers of guns been assembled and used. But for the system of reliefs by which the exhausted attacking infantry are withdrawn to the lines in reserve there would have been none of the Staffords left to tell of the battle in which they themselves were the victors."

The 2nd/5th North Staffs. took their full share in the attack, and, owing to the success, their casualties were comparatively light. One officer, 2nd Lieut. T. F. RATHBONE, was killed, and six were wounded. One of the officers gave this concise description of the battle:—

"We have been in a stunt. The whole show was a great success, and we took all objectives."

For four days they held the ground they had won, and then, on September the 30th, the Battalion was withdrawn. Although they were not concerned with the subsequent fighting the end of the battle should be told.

The weather again became bad on October 3rd, and fighting on the YPRES sector was more and more difficult. None the less the struggle for PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE continued, and, after terrible losses, the place was taken by the Canadians (who had come from LENS) on November 6th.

On leaving the trenches the 2nd/5th went to GUARBEQUE (South of HAZEBROUCK) to have a rest, and they also received drafts to replace their

losses. A few days later they moved to the district of LENS, and on October 10th took over from the Canadians. They were now in the district where the 1st/5th had fought in the earlier part of the year, and the trenches are thus described:—"It was quite a good spot, and the chief item is that we are on one side of what was once a main street, and the Hun on the other. Both sides do a little sniping from top windows, and the remainder of the men in the basements wait for the War to finish."

Here is another description by an officer of the 2nd/6th:—

"During this period each Battalion did eight days in front Line and close supports, eight days in supports, and eight days in Brigade reserve at SOUCHEZ. It was a fairly quiet place, and there were few casualties. At certain parts there was a trench system, but the line was chiefly held by outposts. Advanced positions were held at night by Lewis Gun teams, which were posted after 'stand-down' in the evening, and withdrawn before 'stand-to' in the morning. Now and then there was a little excitement. We were well in the suburbs of LENS, and at certain points the Boche held one side of the street, and we the other, concealed in broken-down houses and cellars. A lot of sniping was carried on, but it was not very effective.

"At one point we were separated from the Boche by a canal on which he had placed a number of ducks, which set up a frightful quacking if anyone approached. I do not know if any of our lads got an extra dinner, but I can vouch for it that several attempts were made. The Hun also had a number of dogs, used for patrol work, and we accounted for several of them."

The Battalion occupied this sector for over a month, and had the usual experiences of trench warfare so often described; the sending out of patrols, the reliefs, the occasional moments of Hun Hate, the rain and cold, and such like. On the night of October 21st/22nd there was some trouble, shortly described as "a busy night with a little gas, plenty of shells, and those damned things, trench mortars. Our luck has been out, as several of our parties were caught."

On November 16th the Canadians returned from YPRES to their old position at LENS, and the 59th Division was withdrawn. The 2nd/5th marched to BERNEVILLE (South of ARRAS), and then took train to HEUDICOURT (North-East of PERONNE). They were now back on the CAMBRAI front, where they had had their first experiences of fighting.

The beginning of 1917 had opened well for the Allies. They had gained considerable victories on the SOMME and at VERDUN, and also in ITALY, and the Roumanians had managed to hold up the German attack. The Russians, too, had revived, and it was hoped that, by all working together, Victory might be gained that year. The Russian Revolution, however, had gone from bad to worse, and all the Summer the Germans and Austrians had been reinforcing the Western and Italian fronts with troops from RUSSIA. These troops had largely contributed to the successful resistance to the Allies'

offensive, and they were now available for offence. It was not possible to do much during the Winter months in BELGIUM and FRANCE, but the Italian front was to be the scene of operations. On October 24th the Austrians and Germans made a sudden attack on the Italians, and (partly owing to treachery) broke through at CAPORETTO. The Italians had to retreat with enormous losses, and French and British troops were sent to their assistance, and eventually, on November 9th, a stand was made on the PIAVE. In order to render assistance, by keeping German troops on the Western front, it was decided to make another attack in spite of the lateness of the year. The Germans were firmly established from the coast to ARRAS, so that it was thought there might be more chance of success on the South near CAMBRAI. It was also thought that by using Tanks instead of artillery we might make an unexpected attack. The area, chosen for this operation, was found in that sector of the Line which lay in front of HAVRINCOURT WOOD, between the BAPAUME-CAMBRAI Road and the SCHELDT CANAL. It was a country of rolling downs, with villages and woods, and eight miles away rose the spires and factory chimneys of CAMBRAI. It was a dry, open country, where Tanks could be used, and, behind the lines, were woods where the Tanks could be hidden. The Third Army, under Sir Julian Byng, which had taken over this part of the Line when the Fifth Army went to YPRES, was chosen for this work. When the 59th Division left LENS they were sent to this sector to form part of the Third Army. Tuesday, November 20th, was the day fixed for the attack. At twenty minutes past six a solitary gun gave the signal, and the Tanks, concealed by a smoke barrage, led the attack, followed by the six Infantry Divisions chosen for the assault. At the same time the artillery broke loose, and deluged the German rear and communications with shells.

The surprise was complete. The Tanks cut lanes through the wire, destroyed the Machine-guns, and enfiladed the trenches. The Infantry followed behind and completed the work. On the first day they made a great advance, but failed to take two essential points, BOURLON WOOD and FLESQUIERES. On the second day, November 21st, FLESQUIERES was taken, but the Germans had now been able to bring up reinforcements, and the advance became more and more difficult. The most bitter fighting was round BOURLON WOOD and village, which were taken and retaken over and over again. On November 27th the Guards' Division made a final effort to take this position, but, after a preliminary success, and most desperate fighting, had to retire to their original Line. They had suffered very heavy losses. This ended the first stage of what is known as the BATTLE OF CAMBRAI. The result so far had been to force a Salient across the HINDENBURG LINE; and 10,500 prisoners, 350 Machine-guns, and 100 guns had been captured. The Salient had many weak points. It formed roughly a bulge with a front of about ten miles, and sides of five miles. On its front left corner was BOURLON WOOD, where the Germans held the high ground, and, further to the right,

the British had failed to take the positions which would have made the Salient secure. The Germans had recognized the danger of this threat to CAMBRAI, and, during the last week of November, sixteen fresh Divisions were brought up. The British Command also made preparations to resist the expected counter-attack, bringing up reinforcements, and strengthening the defences.

At 10-30 a.m., November 27th, the 59th Division received instructions to reinforce the Guards' Division with two Infantry Brigades. The 176th (Staffords) and 177th (Lincolns and Leicesters) marched to RIBECOURT and TRESCAULT in the direction of BOURLON. (Map III, page 51).

On the night of November 28th the Stafford Brigade relieved the 2nd Guards' Brigade, and took over the trenches from BOURLON WOOD to CANTAING, on the South-East, and on November 29th the whole of the 59th Division took over from the Guards' Division. The Stafford Brigade was in the trenches, with the 2nd/6th North and 2nd/6th South on the left in BOURLON WOOD, and the 2nd/5th North and the 2nd/5th South to the right near CANTAING; the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade was in support at FLESQUIERES, and the Sherwood Brigade was in reserve at TRESCAULT. On the left flank of the 59th Division, and also holding part of BOURLON WOOD, was the 47th Division, and on the right, in front of MARCOING, the 6th Division. On being relieved the Guards' Division marched back through the Salient, in the direction of METZ. The Salient, held by the British, was in a very exposed position; it is obvious that, if the Germans forced in either side, the troops at the point of the Salient near BOURLON WOOD would be cut off. This was the plan that the enemy had chosen, to concentrate their efforts on the flanks, and also to attack the whole Salient.

At 7 a.m. on the morning of November 30th the Germans made their attack. It was a sudden attack with a short artillery preparation, and then a rush of Infantry supported by aeroplanes. Although it was made with almost overwhelming forces the Line held, with the exception of that at the South-East of the Salient, where the enemy broke through, and advanced as far as GOUZEAUCOURT. This advance threatened the communications of the whole Salient, and, unless it could be checked, all the Divisions near BOURLON WOOD would be cut off. There was much concern at the Headquarters of several Divisions, which were near GOUZEAUCOURT, and all kinds of troops were brought up, including Labour Companies and Engineers, and these made a gallant defence. Amongst these was the 470th Field Company, commanded by Major Robinson, who were on their way to rejoin the 59th Division. This Company was instructed by the G.O.C. the 29th Division to defend the village against the German attack. Two sections were placed in the village, and two other sections on the road to the South. As the men only carried 50 rounds of ammunition, they were ordered to reserve their fire until the last moment, which they did, and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. When their ammunition began to run short, they retired to the West; but fortunately Major

Conlan, of the 59th Divisional Train, having learned of the situation, was able to bring up ammunition in his motor-car. The Germans made further efforts to break through, but the Engineers, aided by some men of the Durham Pioneers, made a gallant resistance; and at 2 p.m., when matters were getting very serious, three Companies of the Guards came to their assistance. At 11-15 of that morning the Guards had just left the village of METZ, on their way back from BOURLON WOOD, when the first news of the disaster reached them, and this news was confirmed by the appearance of gunners coming back with the sights and broken breech-blocks of their abandoned guns in their hands. The 1st Brigade was leading, under the command of General De-Crespigny; he halted his Brigade in a hollow near GOUZEAUCOURT WOOD, fixed bayonets, and then, deploying into line, advanced in extended order across the fields. They were just in time, and, advancing, recovered GOUZEAUCOURT, and, by the evening, with the help of some cavalry, they had re-established the Line, and saved the position.

At 7-30 a.m. the enemy had attacked the right flank of the 59th Division, and the left of the 6th Division, from NINE WOOD, but this attack had broken down under rifle and artillery fire.

Lieut.-Colonel H. Johnson described the attack in one of his letters:—

“On November 28th the Battalion relieved the Guards. We had a quiet relief, and no casualties, and things were quiet the next day, but 'livened up' during the night, the enemy shelling us with H.E. mixed with gas-shells. At about 8 o'clock next morning (November 30th), the Huns attacked and our telephone lines to the front Companies held out just long enough to let us learn that the Boche were seen coming over, and then we were cut off from all communications forward and behind. It was an anxious time, and the attack did not die down sufficiently to allow me to move until dusk, when I went round the front Line, which was nothing but a series of slits with no wire, and no communication trenches. The Boche had not advanced close enough under their barrage, and so the front Line had a 200 yard field of fire for their rifles and Lewis Guns. Later on the supports had some fighting with aeroplanes, thirty or forty of which were over us all day—all enemy—and not very high. The aeroplanes dropped bombs, and fired their Machine-guns at us, and we replied with rifles. They wounded two of our men, and we brought down two machines. One was brought down by a Lewis Gun, and the other by Lieut. Emerson with a rifle. The aeroplanes came down close enough to see the pilot and observer. When the enemy broke, leaving a lot of dead, it was as much as our officers and N.C.O.s could do, to prevent the men from going after them.

“The attack was repeated later in the day, and again beaten off. The line could see reinforcements coming from apparently nowhere, and one man, Corporal THOMAS, jumped out of his trench, ran forward 200 yards, and then dropped down and crawled through some trees and out at the other side. He



then crawled further forward another 150 yards. From here he could see a large German dug-out, and watched 200 men come out in threes and fours, who passed within 20 yards of him. He allowed them to go about 200 yards, and then fired at them in the back. He went out at 11 a.m. and came back at 3-30.

"We had to get a message to Brigade, and two runners volunteered to take it. One of the men was hit in the chest and killed, and the other, Private TUNSTALL, was wounded in the leg. The latter took the message, and crawled in with it, before fainting. These are just two incidents during the day. The night was quiet, and we spent it digging and wiring."

For these two gallant deeds, Corporal THOMAS received the V.C., the first gained by the 5th North Staffords, and Private TUNSTALL received the D.C.M.

November 30th had been a very anxious time for the whole Division. Not only were they faced with an attack on their front, but they knew that their rear was in danger. Two Battalions, the 2nd/5th and 2nd/6th Sherwood Foresters, had been sent to the help of the 6th Division, and the 177th Brigade had been ordered to prepare their position at FLESQUIERES for all-round defence. The successes of the afternoon had made the position easier, but there was a danger of renewed attacks. The 2nd/6th South and 2nd/6th North Staffs. in BOURLON WOOD had been heavily shelled throughout the day, and at 10 p.m. there was a violent bombardment of gas-shells and H.E. which lasted until four next morning. There was no wind to clear away the gas, and the casualties were very heavy, especially in the 2nd/6th South Staffs., who lost 350 men.

An officer, Lieutenant Gossling of the 2nd/6th N. Staffs., who was himself gassed, described the trials of this gas shelling on his Battalion:—

"On the following day (Wednesday, November 28th) we went up and took over from the Welsh Guards in BOURLON WOOD. It was then our troubles commenced in real earnest. The Guards had made slits in the ground for protection, but it was impossible to get very far down on account of the tree trunks. The Huns shelled heavily all night, and the following day, and the casualties were heavy, but we had no option but to grin and bear it.

"On Thursday night the shelling increased considerably, not only H.E.s. but a number of gas shells, both mustard and phosgene. On Friday morning, November 30th, from 'stand-down' until about 8-30, it was moderately quiet, except that the Boche had several aeroplanes up. At 8-45 he opened out with every gun he had on that front, and simply plastered the wood from end to end. The barrage moved backwards and forwards the whole day, and it was only when it had gone forward a bit that we could give the wounded any attention.

"It was Hell, real Hell, and the few who were lucky to escape will not forget it until their dying day. The wood was simply reeking with gas, as they must have sent thousands of shells over. We must have lost several hundred men. The advanced main dressing-station was shelled when I was

on my way down, killing quite a number of wounded, but I remember little more until I found myself in Hospital at ROUEN on Sunday (December 2nd)."

The fighting had continued all day on various parts of the Salient, but the Germans had no more substantial gains. Next day, December 1st, they made further attacks, which were beaten off. At 11 a.m. they made another effort against the 2nd/5th N. Staffs., but without artillery. The men could see the attack form up a thousand yards away, and when it was made it was broken up with rifles and Lewis Guns. The next day, December 2nd, was fairly quiet, and at night the Stafford Brigade was relieved by the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade.

The casualties of the 2nd/5th had been wonderfully light. One officer, Lieut. R. H. WILKS, had been killed, and another, Lieut. Snelling, wounded; thirteen men had been killed, and 50 wounded, and at least 300 casualties had been inflicted on the enemy. The gas shells, on the night of November 30th, 500 of which had passed just over the Headquarters, had done little harm, as the wind had been blowing in the right direction, and during the bombardments the former German dug-outs had given splendid shelter. The men were highly pleased with their success, but tired out. They had not had a shave for five days, nor any hot food, and not enough water, and very little sleep, as they had been busy consolidating the trenches all night, and "standing-to" all day.

One of the officers, Captain A. Cotterill, who had come straight out from MABLETHORPE on his first trip to FRANCE, arrived at the Quarter-Master's stores after the Battalion had moved up to the Line. He was to have waited there, but was commanded by the Division to take charge of a party composed of cooks, shoemakers, tailors, and other men. He took up this party, and helped to repel the "break-through" on the right.

Captain T. E. TILDESLEY and Lieutenant W. N. BLADEN were awarded the M.C. for their courage on the afternoon of November 30th. Their Companies occupied a series of disconnected posts, which they visited in broad daylight, and in full view of the enemy, encouraging their men, whilst their line was under heavy artillery, Machine-gun, and rifle-fire, and the enemy could be seen massing for an attack.

The battle had by this time subsided, but it was evident that the British position was not tenable. The German success on the right had narrowed the Salient, and it was necessary to flatten it out near BOURLON WOOD. On December the 4th it was decided to withdraw the Divisions holding this sector. The 59th Division carried out its withdrawal in the night under cover of one and a half Battalions, which held a sunken road. On December 6th there was a further withdrawal. During the afternoon, owing to a mist, an enemy's force of three to five Battalions made an attack against the front and flank of the rearguard Line. The S.O.S. signal was sent up, but, probably owing to the signal being a red Verrey Light, there was some delay in answering it. The enemy came to close quarters with the rearguard, and there was some hand-

to-hand fighting, in which five prisoners were taken. Finally, when the barrage came down, the enemy's attack met with heavy losses. Those of his troops, which got through the barrage, were dealt with by the rearguard and Machine-gun fire, the latter being most effective. The flank attack was against a beetroot-sugar factory, and was very serious for a time, but a bayonet charge by the garrison drove back the enemy, and a Machine-gun was captured. The rearguard then retired with comparatively few casualties.

On December 7th the FLESQUIERES position was reached, and on the following days it was firmly consolidated. There was no further enemy action, with the exception of some shelling. So ended the Battle of CAMBRAI. The British had gained 11,000 yards of the HINDENBURG LINE, and had captured 11,000 prisoners, and 145 guns. The Germans had stopped a break-through to CAMBRAI, and taken 6,000 prisoners and 100 guns. The attack also prevented reinforcements being sent to the Italian Front, where the Allies had settled down upon the line of the PIAVE. With this battle the serious fighting of the year came to an end, and both sides remained quiescent for the Winter, and prepared for the Spring of the following year, 1918, destined to be the last Spring of the Great War.



LIEUT. J. L. NEWTON.



LIEUT. C. R. NICHOLLS.



LIEUT. C. J. NORE.



LIEUT. G. C. OSWELL.



LIEUT. H. L. OSWELL.



LIEUT. J. OULTON.



LIEUT. PARKER-JERVIS.



LIEUT. E. W. PARKINSON.



LIEUT. H. G. PASCOE.



LIEUT. A. PEACH.



LIEUT. W. T. PEMBERTON.



LIEUT. S. B. PENDLETON.



LIEUT. H. H. PICKFORD.



LIEUT. A. W. K. PLANT.



LIEUT. W. PLANT.



LIEUT. W. M. N. POLLARD.



## CHAPTER X.

THE END OF THE 1st/5th—THE 2nd/5th ON THE 21st MARCH, 1918—  
THE END OF THE 59th DIVISION.

THE 1st/5th North Staffs. had left LENS on July 2nd, 1917, and the whole 46th Division was removed to rest and recuperate. The 1st/5th was billeted on July 3rd at RAIMBERT, where they remained for about three weeks. Afterwards the Division was moved up to the Line, and at the beginning of August took over from the 6th Division the trenches opposite HULLUCH. These trenches lay to the South of the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT and to the North of LENS. (See Map II, page 35.)

On August 7th the 1st/5th relieved the 1st/6th N. Staffs. in the HULLUCH Sector. The ordinary trench warfare continued, and there was no extensive fighting. To keep the enemy occupied, and to gain information, there were several raids. On the night of the 15th/16th October the 1st/5th made a small raid, entered the enemy trenches, and captured a prisoner. For their gallantry on that night Lieut. L. STANFORTH and Sergeant Thomas SHUKER were respectively given the M.C. and the M.M. The other Battalions also had their raids, and on the 31st October the 1st/6th North Staffs. made a raid on a very large scale, which was most successful. They captured 50 prisoners, killed 80 in the trenches, and an unknown number, estimated at 70, were blown up in the dug-outs. Their own casualties amounted to three officers and 11 men wounded.

During these winter months there were the usual round of patrols, and several more raids. On November 10th an attempted raid by "D" Company was held up by Machine-guns on both flanks, and Lieutenant H. P. Evans was wounded. On the 25th of the same month one of the patrols met 30 of the enemy in No Man's Land and drove them off. On December 12th another raid was to be made by Lieutenant T. Wint, but was frustrated by Machine-gun fire from the flanks.

On December 21st Lieutenant T. Wint and ten men made a daylight sortie near a crater. They crossed over into the enemy's line and jumped into a hostile post held by at least 20 men. After exchanging shots and bombs, as they were outnumbered, they decided to withdraw. In withdrawing Lieutenant Wint and Corporal Johnson were caught in the enemy wire, and had to drop into a shell-hole. Ten of the enemy came up to them, shouting "Hands up, we know where you are," but, before they could reach them, four of the enemy were knocked out by rifle fire from the trenches, and the remainder fled. The officer and corporal afterwards managed to get back. Lieutenant Wint was wounded, and two men were missing, and two wounded. For their bravery, Lieutenant WINT was awarded the M.C., and Corporal JOHNSON the D.C.M. Two other officers, viz., Captain MILLAR (R.A.M.C.), who had been



with the Battalion since 1916, and Lieutenant W. E. COWLISHAW, who had served in the ranks in 1915, and afterwards seen much service as signalling officer, were awarded the M.C.

On December 24th the Battalion celebrated their third Christmas in FRANCE. There was a Church Parade in the morning, followed by a Company football match. At 2 o'clock there was a Christmas dinner, and in the evening a concert.

On the 24th of January, 1918, the 46th Division was relieved by the 11th Division, and the 1st/5th North Staffs. handed over their trenches to the 6th Border Regiment, and marched to FOUQUEREUIL. (See Map I, page 20.) As it proved this was the last event in the History of the 1st/5th North Staffs.

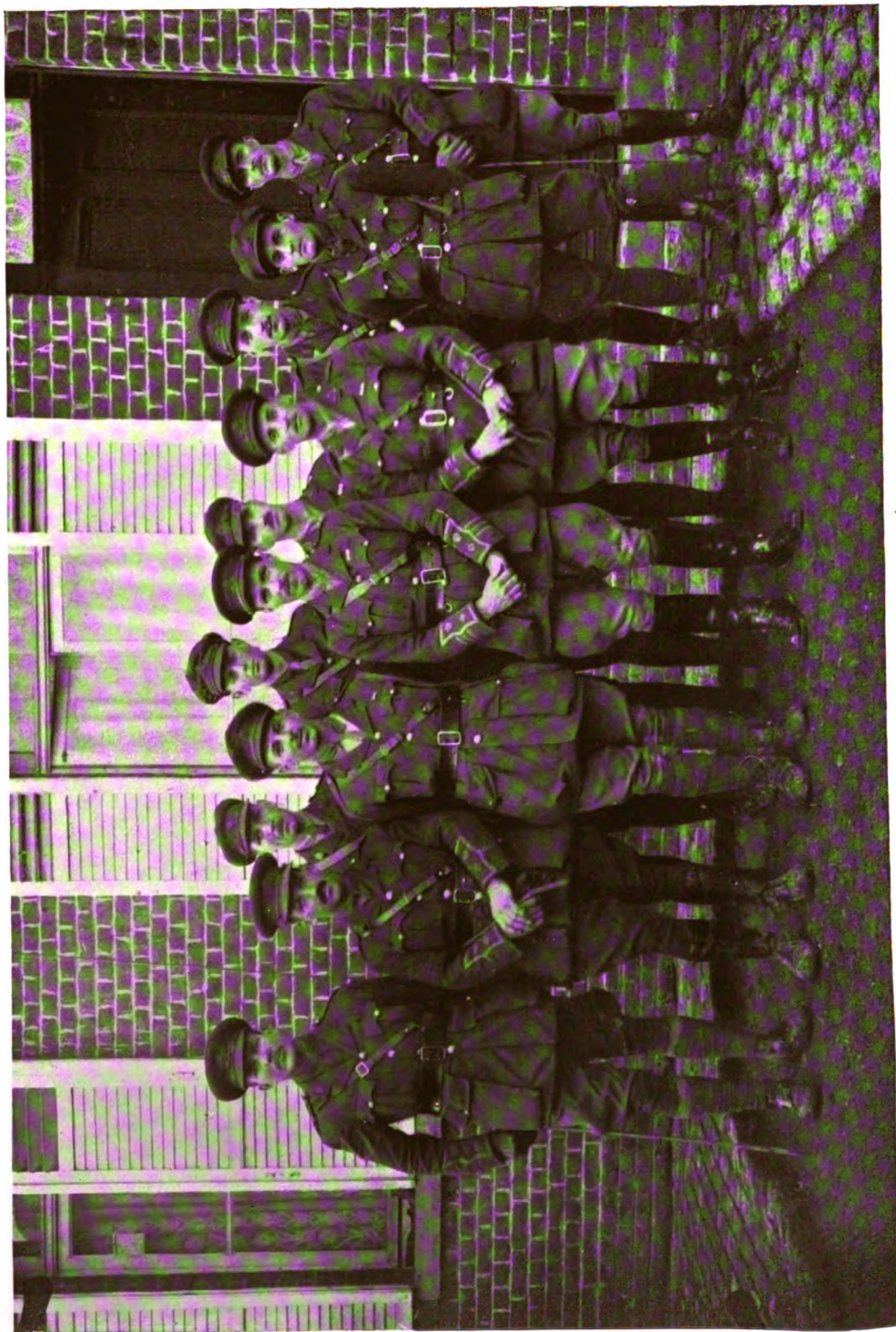
For various reasons the Military Authorities had decided that the strength of the Brigades should be reduced from four to three Battalions. This meant that in the Stafford Brigade one Battalion must be disbanded. Fate decided that the 1st/5th should be that one. This was a terrible shock, after over four years' service, and nearly four years in FRANCE. On January 29th, 1918, the Battalion began to be broken up. Officers and men were scattered; ten officers and 197 men went to the 2nd/5th North Staffs., five officers and 184 men to the 1st/6th N. Staffs., four officers and 200 men to the 2nd/6th N. Staffs., and four officers and 190 men to the 9th N. Staffs.

Sergeant-Major Hazlehurst, who had been with the Battalion all through the fighting, speaks for all those who had served with the Battalion.

"It was a great shock to all the old 1st/5th, from the Commanding Officer down to the last joined recruit, when the order came along that we were to be disbanded. After all these years of good hard service in some of the worst conditions imaginable, it was very hard for old comrades to part. Speaking personally I can say that I was more upset than I care to mention, because I had come to look upon the 1st/5th as the *one* Battalion in the British Army, and I was proud to belong to it."

Thus ended the 1st/5th, but "its soul went marching on" in the other North Stafford Battalions. Most of the original officers and men had gone, and those who took their places had come from the Reserve Battalion in ENGLAND. These prided themselves on being "North Staffords," and all hoped to be with a North Stafford Battalion, without distinction of number.

The 2nd/5th North Staffs., to which so many of the 1st/5th went, had also passed "a quiet War Christmas," if anything could be quiet in the War area. Before leaving the position at FLESQUIERES the Battalion on December 14th made a raid. The raiding party, which was commanded by Captain A. Cotterill, gained its objective, but one of the officers, Lieut. W. F. BELCHER, was severely wounded, and subsequently died on December 17th. Lieut. AKED here gained the M.C., and Sergeant J. GERITY the Military Medal. They first



SOME OF THE LAST OFFICERS OF THE 2nd/5th, 1918.



helped to bring in the wounded officer, and then went again into the enemy's lines and brought in a wounded man. They went out twice again looking for wounded, and remained out until the enemy reoccupied their position.

The 2nd/5th finally left FLESQUIERES on December 25th, and spent Christmas Day in the train, returning to the LE COUROI area, near FERVENT, due West of ARRAS. They reached their billets about 2 a.m. on December 26th, having to march about nine miles through a snowstorm, with the snow lying on the ground about a foot deep. Except for a few odd days in their marches, this was the first time they had been in billets since their arrival in FRANCE. They remained here until February 8th, 1918.

The 2nd/5th N. Staffs. here received a strong reinforcement from the disbanded 1st/5th (as already stated), and became the 5th North Staffs. On the 8th of February they left LE COUROI, and, marching by stages and passing through ERVILLERS and MORV, on the 16th of February relieved the 2nd/6th S. Staffs. at NOREUIL, near BULLECOURT, about half-way between the VIMY RIDGE, on the North, in front of ARRAS, and FLESQUIERES to the South-East. Colonel H. Johnson was in Command. (See Map III, page 51.)

On February 18th a patrol was sent out at night under Sergeant Buckley. Whilst he was trying to locate a German post, he was shot in the leg within 15 yards of the German Line. It was thought he was killed, but, at mid-day, Major Wenger and Captain Grice, who had just joined from the disbanded 1st/5th, with which they had seen much service, decided to try and prevent the enemy from getting an identification. They crawled out, and saw where he was from seeing his rifle. Whilst Major Wenger covered the German post and kept down their fire with a rifle, Captain Grice crawled forward. He found Sergeant Buckley with his leg broken, and unable to move. He then crawled back, dragging the wounded man with him, and finally all three got safely back into the trenches.

Major (now Lt.-Colonel) WENGER had been one of the original officers of the 1st/5th, and had, on many occasions, performed gallant deeds, and received the M.C. (with two Bars). Captain GRICE had joined the 1st/5th in 1916, when at RANSART, and had gained the M.C. One of his first exploits at RANSART had been to go out and search for a revolver, which he had lost on a preceding night in No Man's Land when on patrol. Both happily survived the War, though Captain Grice was made prisoner on March 21st.—These are only samples of deeds done as a matter of course by many men and officers.

On the early morning of the 6th of March the 5th North Staffs. made a raid. Lieutenants Jones and Hayward with about 20 men formed the party. Two Stokes-mortar shells were taken, and with these two dug-outs were destroyed. They also captured two Machine-guns, and four prisoners, who reported that the German attack was to commence between the 12th and 16th of March. They themselves had two casualties.

On March 10th the Stafford Brigade was relieved by the Sherwood Brigade, and went into reserve at MORY for eight days. Every morning at 4-30 a.m. they "stood-to," and on the 18th the whole Brigade moved forward to their appointed assembly place and were in position before daybreak.

During these days a great deal of work was done to improve the defences by making additional support trenches and reserve trenches, and putting out wire. The officers spent several days making themselves acquainted with the system of defence and the locations of the dumps, and all knew what was to be done in case of attack. Many deserters came in from the enemy, and all said the attack would take place within a day or two. On the night of 19th/20th March the Stafford Brigade relieved the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade, who went into Reserve at MORY.

The condition of the Allies at the beginning of 1918 was very different from that of the preceding year. At the end of 1917 the Bolsheviks had obtained control of the Russian Government, and signed an armistice with Germany on December 6th. ROUMANIA, who had thus become isolated, had also been compelled to come to terms, and ITALY, after her crushing defeat at CAPORETTO, was with difficulty maintaining her position on the PIAVE. In PALESTINE the British troops had captured JERUSALEM on December 9th, but these operations were not likely yet to affect GERMANY. Our great hope was AMERICA, but, though troops had begun to arrive in FRANCE even in June, 1917, it would be several months before they could make any great difference.

GERMANY once again imagined that she had a good chance of finishing the War by putting out all her strength on the Western Front and crushing FRANCE and GREAT BRITAIN, before the American main body of troops could arrive. She brought half a million men from RUSSIA, and also her troops from ITALY and the BALKANS. She only waited for the end of the Winter to make the final effort.

The Allies were quite aware of what was going to happen, and prepared for the defence. The British took over part of the French line at the beginning of the year as far as the OISE. The Third Army, to which the 59th Division had been attached since leaving the YPRES sector, was moved to the North, and on its right, from near GOUZEAUCOURT to the OISE, the Line was taken over by the Fifth Army, under General Gough. It was not known *where* the Germans would strike, and there were not enough men to hold the whole Line really securely, and so it was decided to reinforce most strongly the sector from ARRAS to the coast, since any retreat there would be fatal, and to risk the sector South of ARRAS, since there it was possible to retreat towards the SOMME without so much danger. If retreat was necessary in that sector, reinforcements could be brought from the British in the North or the French in the South. The Fifth Army and the right of the Third Army were in this sector. The 59th Division at BULLECOURT had on their left the 34th Division, and on their right the 6th Division.

The German defence at PASSCHENDAELE had shown what could be done by deepening the Line of defence, and the British adopted a similar system. In front lay a "forward zone" organised in two sections—a line of outposts to give the alarm and fall back, and a well-wired line of resistance behind. In the latter were a number of redoubts, armed with Machine-guns, and so arranged that any enemy advance would come under cross fire. The redoubts were set 2,000 yards apart, and the spaces between them were to be protected by a barrage from field-guns and corps heavy guns. The lines of resistance with the redoubts were intended to hold out to the last, and to receive no support from the rear, except from such counter-attacks as might be necessary.

The purpose of the "forward zone" was to break up the advancing enemy, rather than to form a continuous Line of defence. Behind the "forward zone," at a distance of from half a mile to three miles, came the "Battle Zone," arranged on the same plan, except that it had no outposts. A mile or so in the rear lay the final defensive zone, which had not been completed, when the battle commenced. The first weeks of March were fine and dry, and it was certain that the offensive would soon take place. The aeroplanes had reported a big concentration, and the Third and Fifth Armies were warned to be ready. Frequent raids were made for the sake of obtaining information.

On Tuesday, the 19th of March, the weather broke, and there was a drizzling rain. On Wednesday, March 20th, it was again fine, with the result that on the night of the 20th/21st there was a thick fog, which made observation impossible. About 2 a.m. the British front was warned to expect an assault. The "Forward Zone" was already manned, and at 4-30 a.m. the order was sent to man the "Battle Zone." All through the night the Germans, under cover of the mist, had been bringing up their troops, and on the morning of March 21st, along the 50 miles between CROISILLES and the OISE, they had 37 Divisions ready for the attack.

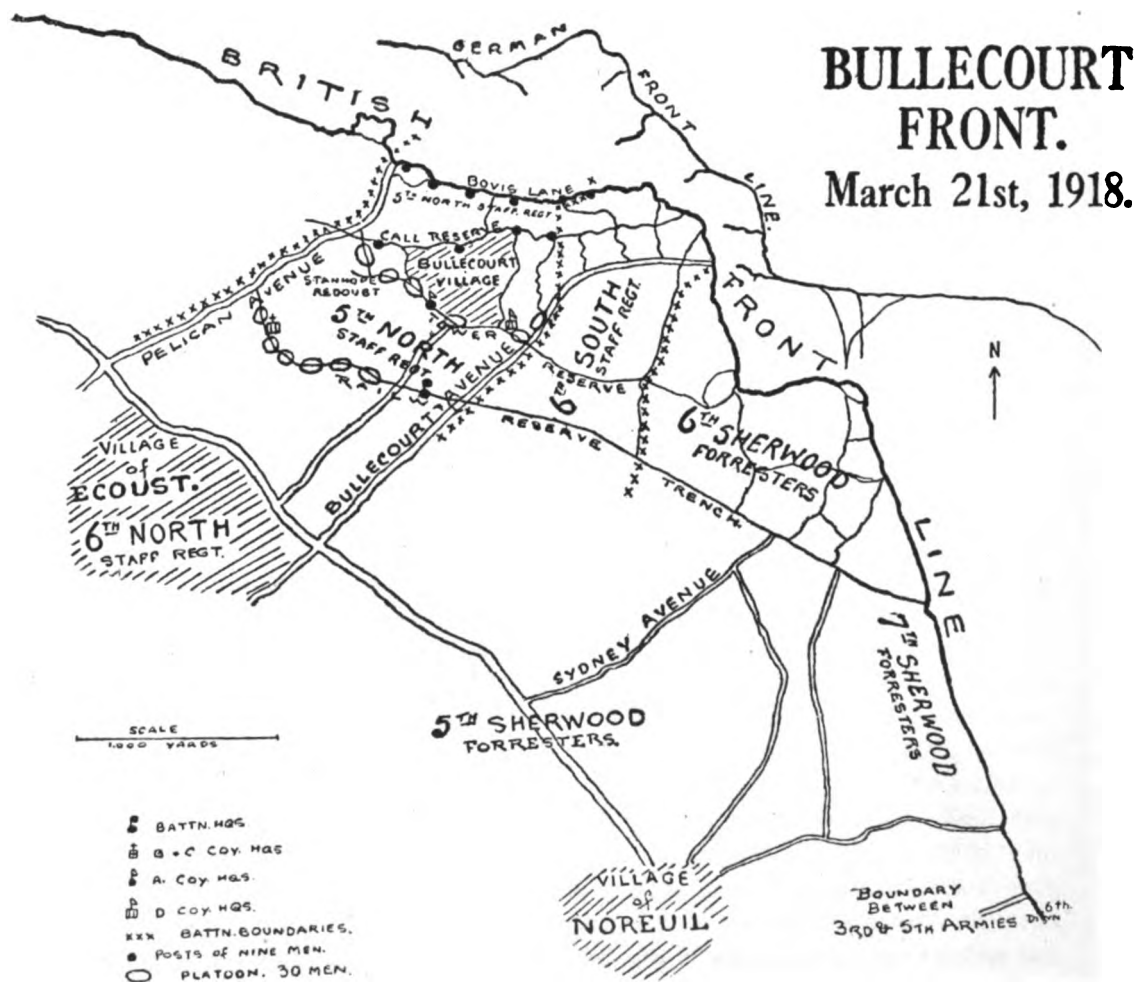
At 4-45 a.m. the bombardment started, and the whole front was shelled with high explosives and gas. Not only was the front Line shelled, but also the "Battle Zone," Headquarters, and all communications. The bombardment even extended beyond the battle front, and there was violent shelling at RHEIMS, ARRAS, MESSINES, YPRES, and DUNKIRK. Never had such a severe and widespread "preparation" been made in the whole campaign. The British artillery replied, but the mist made observation almost impossible.

The infantry attack commenced at eight o'clock, and by ten it was general along the front, South of ARRAS to the OISE. Under cover of the mist they reached the outposts, who had been overwhelmed by the bombardment, and, as the Machine-gunners in the redoubts could not see what was happening, the Germans passed between them. These redoubts none the less made a gallant resistance, and many held out, although hopelessly surrounded, for the greater part of the day. In many places the enemy broke through on the flanks of Battalions, and attacked them in the rear. The "Battle Zone" made



a magnificent resistance, but all the time they were hampered by the mist, which rendered the artillery almost helpless. The heaviest attack was against the Fifth Army, but the right wing of the Third Army was also heavily pressed.

The 59th Division was holding a small Salient at BULLECOURT, and the East of it. On the left were the 5th North Staffs. in BULLECOURT Village,



and on their right were the 6th South Staffs. Next to them were the 6th Sherwood Foresters, and on the extreme right of the Division were the 7th Sherwood Foresters. Next to them on their right were the Battalions of the 6th Division. In support of the Stafford Battalions, near the village of ECOUST, were the 6th North Staffs., and on their right, near the village of NOREUIL, in support of the two Sherwood Battalions, were the 5th Sherwood Foresters. (The 5th South Staffs. and the 8th Sherwood Foresters had been disbanded

at the beginning of the year.) Finally, in Reserve at MORY, were the three Battalions of the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade.

The 5th North Staffords had "A" Company on the left, and "D" Company on the right in the front Line; and "B" and "C" Companies were in support. The German trenches were quite close, in some cases only 30 yards away.

The enemy started firing gas-shells between four and five in the morning, and this continued for several hours. "We had prepared everything we possibly could," said an officer of the 5th North, "knowing it was coming. It came just like a flood. They did not break through our front Line, but broke through the front Line about a mile to our right, and then attacked us on the flank."

The Battalions in front had held back the frontal attack, when suddenly they heard fighting in the villages of NOREUIL and ECOUST in their rear. They were soon hopelessly surrounded, and all they could hope to do was to sell their lives as dearly as possible. They were scattered about in little groups, and each group held out as long as it could. There was no chance of receiving reinforcements or supplies, and the enemy came on in ever increasing numbers. When all the ammunition was exhausted there was nothing else to be done but surrender. The 5th North Staffords were killed or wounded or taken prisoners in groups, though two Companies held out for eight hours, until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Colonel Harry Johnson was wounded before mid-day, being struck across the head by a bullet, which then burrowed down his back. Thus knocked over, he was taken prisoner, when the Germans spread over what was previously the village of BULLE-COURT. Of the whole Battalion, only two officers, Captain W. N. Bladen and Lieut. H. Pratt (of whom the former was wounded), and 33 wounded and unwounded men, were left. The remainder were either killed or made prisoners of war, many of the latter also being wounded. Ten officers, Captains A. COTTERILL, E. N. B.-H.-SOAME, F. D. BENNETT, T. A. HOGG, and Lieutenants R. B. C. AKED, M.C., R. M. TRIMBLE, J. TOWNSEND, R. CRADDOCK, W. HAYWARD, and J. JARVIS, were killed; three officers, Lieut.-Col. H. Johnson, D.S.O., and Lieutenants L. C. Grice, M.C., and F. R. Tunncliffe were wounded and made prisoners; and eight officers, Major T. E. Tildesley, M.C., Captain and Adjutant V. B. Shelley, Captain M. Settle, and Lieutenants W. A. Beresford, H. St. J. B. Watson, M.C., A. M. Jones, G. L. King, and Captain G. R. Lipp, M.C., R.A.M.C., the Medical Officer, were made prisoners unwounded. Captain SETTLE died of Influenza on the 23rd of December in Germany. Total casualties, 22 officers and 539 men. There were twelve other officers who were not in the action, being away in hospital, on courses, or on leave.

Captain W. N. Bladen, M.C., commanding "B" Company, which was in support, one of the two officers who escaped, gave the following description of his adventures in one of his letters.

"On the evening of 19th/20th March the Battalion took over from the 4th Lincolns; we had no casualties going up. On the 20th everything was quiet, and we spent most of the time in repairing our own trenches, and at night I sent up a working party to 'A' Company. In the afternoon Lieut. Pratt and I went up to see 'A' and 'D' Companies, who were in the front Line. At 2 a.m. on March 21st I was awakened by heavy shelling, and again at 3 a.m. Both times I went up to the top of the dug-out to see what was going on, but the firing soon died down, and everything appeared normal. Between 4 and 5 a.m. the bombardment commenced in earnest with a heavy dose of gas-shells, and gas-masks had to be put on, and this was soon followed by H.E. (High Explosives).

"The bombardment continued for several hours, and the telephone lines were cut in many places, so that I could not get through to Headquarters after 6 a.m. The trenches were knocked to bits, and I had many casualties, including Lieutenant JARVIS. 'C' Company, too, who were in support with us, suffered very heavily, and had to come into one of our trenches.

"At 10-30 a.m. we saw the enemy—first he came over on the right flank of the Battalion, and was in ECOUST in a very short time. From my position I could not see our Headquarters, and I think they were captured at about this time; the last message I had had from them was at 9 a.m., when one of my own runners returned. Lieutenant Pratt, who was in command of one of the platoons, came back with his men; he told me that the troops on his left had withdrawn, that his right flank was in the air, and so he had decided to come back. He had not seen anything of Lieutenant Hayward, who was in command of the forward platoon, and the Germans were all round him.

"It was about mid-day when the Boche pushed forward his frontal attack, and at the same time he had worked down our support trenches. Captain Grice, who was with 'C' Company, had made a block, but he could not hold it, so that, after a discussion, we decided to change our positions, and made a block near our Company Headquarters. The Boches were still coming on in front, and we could hardly miss hitting them. The ground rather favoured their advance, as it was a mass of shell-holes, and they crawled from one to the other. At this moment we had been joined by a party from the 102nd Brigade, who formed part of the 34th Division on the left, consisting of one officer and about 20 men. All the time the Boche was coming on. He had worked his way right round our flanks, and was also pressing hotly in front. At 3 p.m. we decided that we could not hold on any longer; our supply of bombs had run out, and we had not much ammunition. The order was not given any too soon, for they were quite close. I have never seen such numbers before, and the ground in front was thick with them, coming on line after line.

"It was at this time I was wounded. We decided we could not withdraw by 'Pelican' trench, as the Boche had worked round, and the only outlet was by 'Tiger' trench, and I went down 'Pelican' telling the men to withdraw.



LIEUT. W. C. POYSER.



LIEUT. H. PRATT.



LIEUT. T. H. PRESTON.



LIEUT. W. PROCTOR.



LIEUT. J. W. PROFFITT.



LIEUT. G. PURSLOW.



LIEUT. T. F. RATHBONE.



LIEUT. J. H. RILEY.



LIEUT. C. H. ROBINSON.



LIEUT. E. ROBINSON.



LIEUT. H. ROBINSON.



LIEUT. W. H. ROBINSON.



LIEUT. P. B. ROSS.



LIEUT. J. ROWLEY.



LIEUT. J. W. ROWLEY.



LIEUT. H. E. SALT.



I had reached the end of the part of the trench we held just to make sure there were no more men who had not been warned to retire, when, on looking back, I found it was impossible to get back by the trench. There was only one thing for it, and that was to get over the top and reach the 'Tiger.' I had got half-way across when all of a sudden I felt a smack on the knee just like a cricket ball bang—it bowled me over. I had no time to lose, and so I made up my mind I would try for the trench again at all costs. This I did, and reached the trench without further damage. There I met Captain Settle, who was in command of 'C' Company, and was leading the men that were left of the two Companies. I hobbled along after them as best I could, and we went down the trench as far as a sunken road, and I here lost sight of Captain Settle.

"We had not seen Captain Grice for some time, so that Lieutenant Pratt and I were now alone with about 40 men. We left the sunken road for another trench, and made another stand, but, being hopelessly outnumbered, had to withdraw again, and reached the trenches in front of CROISILLES. Here I left the men with Lieutenant Pratt, and went off with my runner to find any neighbouring troops, so as to get instructions.

"We hunted high and low, and at last, after about an hour's search, I found an artillery Observation Post. We were both fagged out, and had had nothing to eat since midnight. The officer could not get us through to the Brigade, but gave us some bread and cheese to eat. He advised me to go to ST. LEGER, where were the Battery Headquarters, and gave me a guide. My own runner I sent back to Lieutenant Pratt to tell him what I was going to do. With difficulty, as my wound gave me great trouble, I reached ST. LEGER, but the telephone there too was not working, so I was advised to take a lorry, which was just going to ERVILLERS. This I did, and, as soon as I arrived there, I went to our Quartermaster's Stores, but found they had been vacated during the morning. As I could now hardly move I went to a dressing station, leaving a written message for the Brigade. I had my wound dressed, and was sent off in an ambulance to GREVILLERS, where I arrived at midnight, and next day I went by the Hospital train to ETAPLES."

Lieutenant Pratt, with the rest of the men, managed to get back, and were the sole remnant of the Battalion who were in the Line.

It will be seen from the above description what was the fate of the 5th North; and a short account of what happened to the 6th North will help to explain the disaster of March 21st.

The 6th North Staffs. on the morning of March 21st were in support of the Staffords, holding a railway embankment near the village of ECOUST. On their right were the 5th Sherwood Foresters, holding the ground near NOREUIL. Major O. J. Keating, who was captured, gives a full account of the events of the day.



"At about 4-50 a.m. I was awakened by a heavy bombardment. The shell-gas alarm was sounded, and the men took their proper stations. The 6th South Staffs. reported heavy bombardment, but no signs of attack, but we could get no answer to our call on the 5th North Staffs.' Headquarters. Shortly afterwards all telephone communications with the front Line Battalions were cut, and at 9-30 we also lost touch with the Brigade. From the top of the embankment, which we occupied, we could not see any signs of the attack, nor hear any rifle or Machine-gun fire.

"Soon after 9-30 a.m. we saw people coming up from the South-West, and we took them for our own men. The Germans, as I afterwards saw, had sandbags on their helmets, and their fighting equipment was so arranged that even at short distances it was easy to mistake them for our own men. There was also a mist most of the morning. Five minutes later our right Company reported that they were Germans. We opened fire, and they retired. At 11 a.m. we saw troops in artillery formation moving on ECOUST, and as they looked like our men we thought they were our Reserve Brigade moving into position, in accordance with the Defence Scheme, and we sent an officer to get in touch with them. At 11-30 we were fired on heavily from the direction of ECOUST, and it was reported that the enemy were attacking in large numbers.

"Simultaneously we were attacked by two aeroplanes flying very low, and firing bursts with their Machine-guns. We could not hit them, and they continued to bother us the rest of the day. We opened fire with Lewis Guns and rifles, and also an abandoned Vickers Gun, on a column of the enemy moving up the road towards ECOUST, and we inflicted heavy casualties. We now began to suffer heavy casualties, and all the shelters under the embankment were filled with wounded in space of a few minutes.

"We drove the enemy again from the Eastern edge of ECOUST, but we were now being attacked on several sides, and the embankment was being enfiladed. It was now nearly 2 p.m., and we were in danger of being forced into the cup of the ECOUST Valley, which was commanded by high ground on either side. The enemy again attacked ECOUST in large numbers, and at the other places they were gradually driving us in. I reported to Colonel Thorne, and was talking to him when he was killed by a bullet striking him in the head.

"We were now reduced to about 30 men—including wounded—who could still fight, and four or five officers, three of whom were wounded, including myself. I made my way back to the mouth of a tunnel in the embankment. I found the trenches and passages blocked with dead and wounded, and learned that we were running short of ammunition. The position at the mouth of the tunnel was becoming untenable, so I decided to gather the survivors and make a dash for the cemetery. I managed to get a few men together, but the enemy had now occupied the whole embankment and were overlooking us

everywhere. We were completely surrounded, and captured at 4-30 p.m. In all there were about twelve of us left."

The two North Staffs. Battalions shared the same fate as the other Battalions of the 176th and 178th Brigades. The 177th Brigade (Lincolns and Leicesters), who were in Reserve at MORY, at the beginning of the attack, came forward to their appointed assembly position, but then there was a delay on account of the lack of instructions. Finally they advanced in artillery formation, and suffered heavy casualties. They were then attacked by large masses of the enemy, who came round their flanks, and forced them to retire to the "Third Zone." The trenches here were not more than 18 inches deep, and gave very little shelter.

It was now getting dark, and the enemy began to dig in. He had captured the whole of the "Forward Zone," and the "Battle Zone," with the villages of ECOUST and NOREUIL, and most of the artillery, and waited to bring up his heavy guns. During the night a Brigade of the 40th Division came up to support the 177th Brigade. Next day at 3 p.m. the attack was renewed, and, after heavy fighting, the enemy captured the "Third Zone," and at 7 p.m. had reached MORY.

The Germans swept on, but, after the first few days, the attack was gradually checked. The splendid resistance of the soldiers, and the enormous losses of the enemy, allowed the French and British reinforcements to re-establish the Line; and finally, on April 6th, the second Battle of the SOMME, as it is called, came to an end. The junction between the French and British Armies was maintained, and AMIENS was saved.

Mr. John Buchan, in "Nelson's History of the War" (Vol. XXII.), thus summarises this battle:—"One thing was already clear—the splendour of the Allied performance. The fight had begun with an attack by sixty-four German Divisions on thirty-two British. By the end of March seventy-three German Divisions had engaged thirty-seven British. By the 9th of April the total British force in action had grown to forty-six Divisions of Infantry and three of Cavalry, and against them more than eighty German Divisions had been launched. There was at first a disparity of two to one. The retreat succeeded only because of the stubborn valour of the British soldier."

The other Battalions of the 59th Division had similar experiences and losses to those of the 5th North, and "all that were left of them" were immediately withdrawn. On getting back to CANCOURT on March 30th they were inspected by the King, who had come over to France in the hour of danger, and he congratulated them on their fine fight. On March 31st Major T. H. S. Swanton took over the command of the Battalion. The Reserve Battalion at MABLETHORPE sent out drafts to replace the casualties, and men were also obtained from the Notts. and Derby Graduated Battalions, composed of boys between 18 and 19, which had been formed during 1917. Many of these lads had not yet reached 19 when they were sent out, and immediately

found themselves in the thick of the fighting. After the 59th Division had been reformed there was no time to train the men, but on April 11th it was sent up North to the area of POPERINGHE to meet another German attack.

The British front, from the sea to ARRAS, was held by the Second Army on the left, and the First Army on the right, the boundary being the River LYS. On the 7th of April this front was in an unstable condition, owing to the readjustment of the Divisions, and all those holding the Line, with the exception of the 55th, had been greatly weakened in the recent fighting South of ARRAS. The Germans had resolved to attack this sector at ARMENTIERES, hoping to threaten HAZEBROUCK and the Channel ports.

On the evening of April 7th there was an intense gas bombardment, which continued during the following day. At 4 a.m. on Tuesday, April 9th, the bombardment reached its height, and at 7 a.m. the Infantry assault commenced. The full weight fell on the XVth and XIth Corps, and the 2nd Portuguese Division was driven in. This enabled the enemy to outflank the other Divisions, and the whole centre broke. ARMENTIERES and MESSINES were captured on the 11th, and on the following days a Salient was made between YPRES and BETHUNE, as far as BAILLEUL, which fell on April 15th. On April 11th the 5th North Staffs. had taken over the Line at PASSCHENDAELE, but were withdrawn on the 12th, as the ridge had to be abandoned. They then moved on April 14th to a position in rear of BAILLEUL, and took up a line of outposts. At 10 p.m. the same day their outposts were called in, and they moved up through the town of BAILLEUL, and relieved an East Surrey Battalion, holding a position 500 yards in front of the town. The relief was completed by about 2 a.m. on the morning of April 15th. The Germans had attacked on the previous day, but had not gained their objective, and it was known that they were preparing for a new attack on BAILLEUL.

The morning of April 15th passed quietly, but at 4-30 p.m. the German attack was made on the flank, and it met with success. There was no frontal attack on the 5th North Staffs., and they thought all was well, when suddenly, late in the afternoon, they received orders to evacuate their position within 15 minutes and retire beyond BAILLEUL, as they were being outflanked. In spite of an intense artillery bombardment and Machine-gun fire this was successfully done with the loss of one officer and 50 men. The attack had commenced at 4-30 p.m., and by 6 p.m. the whole of the Division were in a position on the far side of BAILLEUL.

The retirement had been so sudden that no notice had been given to Lieutenant A. J. Jenkinson and 25 men who were holding an advanced position on the right flank. Luckily this party had kept touch with the 1st Middlesex on their right, and it was from them that they first learned that the 5th North Staffs. had retired. Hastily they began to retire themselves, but, as it was dark, and they had no maps, they soon lost their way. They spent the night trying to find the 59th Division, but without success, and at 10 a.m. on the next

day, April 16th, they were still searching and very hungry. Luckily they found some rations dumped by the roadside, and these provided a breakfast. With renewed energy they continued the search, and made enquiries at various Headquarters, but without result. At length they saw a transport driver with a North Staffordshire badge, and with his help the missing Unit was found. This small incident gives an idea of the confusion and difficulties of a sudden retreat.

The 59th Division after their retirement filled up a gap about two miles beyond BAILLEUL. The 5th North Staffs. dug themselves in with their entrenching tools after daybreak on April 16th, though they were exposed to Machine-gun fire. The two other Battalions of the Brigade had suffered so heavily that they were withdrawn. The 5th North Staffs. were attached for the time to a Brigade of another Division, and, for two days, April 16th and 17th, were exposed to a heavy bombardment with very little cover, and helped to drive off several German attacks. On April 18th they were relieved by a Battalion of the 51st Division. The men fought splendidly, in spite of the fact that many of them were so very young, and had only just come out to FRANCE. The casualties during these days were six officers and 172 men.

The courageous resistance of the soldiers had given sufficient time for British and French reinforcements to arrive, and the German advance became slower and slower. They had made an attack on the Belgian Army on the North of the YPRES Salient, but were repulsed with a loss of 2,000 killed and 700 prisoners. On April 25th they made another attack, and captured the village of KEMMEL next day. It now seemed that there was a chance of their reaching the Channel ports and cutting off the British Army from its base, and on the morning of April 29th they made a great effort and attacked the village of LOCRE. Eleven German Divisions attacked the British and French in dense formation, and at first, owing to their great superiority in numbers, were successful. The resistance was magnificent, and eventually the Germans were driven back with very heavy losses. This was the last episode in this battle, and thereafter there were only local actions. Once again after a first success the Germans had been repulsed by the marvellous fighting of the British and French soldiers.

During the period from April 18th the 5th North were continually moving about, and on April 27th they took over the Line at OUDERDOM, where they were subject to heavy shelling. There were no dug-outs, but only a few flimsy cellars, but fate was kind, and there were only 50 casualties. On May 2nd they received orders to move back. On getting back, each Battalion of the Division had to send all the men, with the exception of ten officers and 90 men, to the base. On May 9th the Battalion broke up, and the greater part of the men and officers went to the base, whence in course of time they were drafted to other Units.

The German successes on the SOMME and LYS had necessitated many changes. General FOCH was now (since April 14th) in Supreme Command of all the troops in FRANCE, and the French and British troops fought side by side. The losses had been very heavy, and the reinforcements from England were nearly exhausted. Luckily the American troops had begun to arrive in large numbers, and, with a few weeks' further training, they would soon be able to take over a large part of the Line. It was impossible to maintain all the existing Divisions, and so, some of those who had suffered most had to be disbanded. At first it was intended to maintain a certain number of officers and N.C.O.s, and use these to train the Americans to reform the Divisions, but this plan was soon abandoned. The 59th Division was one of those which were broken up.

This Division had nearly disappeared on March 21st, and it had taken all the efforts of the Reserve Units to bring it again up to strength. As soon as this had been done, and before the men were properly trained, the Division was again overwhelmed at BAILLEUL. It would have taken weeks to have made the Division ready for further fighting, and so in May, 1918, the 59th Division ceased to exist, the small remnant joining other Battalions in FRANCE; and, as a consequence, the 5th North Staffords had no longer a Battalion in the B.E.F. From this time onwards the North Staffordshire Territorials were represented in the 46th Division by the 6th North Staffords.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE CROSSING OF THE ST. QUENTIN CANAL, BY THE 46th DIVISION,  
ON SEPTEMBER 29th, 1918, AND THE END OF THE WAR.

THE Germans had gained two great successes in March and April, 1918. They had more than recovered the ground gained by the British in 1916 and 1917, but they had not yet gained a crushing victory. The French had sent large reinforcements to the British, and the Germans now determined to attack the French Front. At 1 a.m. on May 27th they made a sudden attack on the AILETTE front, near RHEIMS. The attack was most successful, and the French were driven back, and during the next few days the advance continued. On May 29th SOISSONS was captured, and on the 31st the MARNE was reached, and the French had lost 40,000 prisoners and 400 guns. For the next few days the fighting continued, but the German successes were smaller, and the French reinforcements had now arrived.

On June 9th the Germans made an attack in another sector between MONTDIDIER and NOYON, but, though they advanced, their gains were less, and on June 18th an attack at RHEIMS failed. It was evident that the German Reserves were getting exhausted, and the Americans had already begun to take their places in the Line. Further, the Austrian attack in ITALY on June 15th had not only been repulsed, but the Italians had recrossed the PIAVE and inflicted heavy losses.

During the last weeks of June and the first weeks of July there was a pause, and it was now certain that the crisis of the War had arrived. The Germans brought up their last reinforcements, and General Foch prepared for the counter-attack. On July 15th the Germans again attacked to the East of RHEIMS, and at the point of their Salient on the MARNE. Both attacks had been expected, and were repulsed, though that on the MARNE made a slight advance. Since March 21st the Allies had been on the defensive, and had succeeded, with great difficulty, in holding up the enemy and maintaining their own Line, but it was now their turn to attack. On July 18th the French under General Mangin made a sudden attack on the West flank of the MARNE Salient. This was the decisive moment of the War. The French troops broke through, and threatened to cut off the Salient, and so the Germans were forced to retreat across the MARNE. During the next few weeks blow after blow was struck at the Germans, and they had soon lost all they had gained since the beginning of the year. Not only had they returned to the defensive of 1917, but they had lost all the advantage they had gained by the Peace with RUSSIA, and the American forces were now in FRANCE. There was only one hope for the enemy, and that was, that the HINDENBURG LINE, which had been of such use to them in 1917, might again enable them to hold out. There was no longer any hope of Victory, but the Allies might grow weary, and,



losing patience, offer favourable terms. Should the HINDENBURG LINE be crossed they knew that there was nothing but hopeless defeat in store for them.

The 46th Division, since the disbandment of one Unit in each Brigade, had shared in the defence. They had not been in the Battles of the SOMME and the LYS, but had remained in that part of the Line near ARRAS, which had stood firm as a rock. When the German retreat began in July they had advanced, but, up to the middle of September, they had not taken a conspicuous share in any of the great events. They had done several good bits of work, for which they had been frequently complimented.

The 6th North Staffs. were commanded by Colonel Stoney, who had been for a short time in command of the 1st/5th at RANSART. One morning in September, whilst visiting the front Line, he was shot in the shoulder by a German sniper, who had remained behind in an old house after the German retirement. Colonel Stoney was succeeded in the Command by Colonel Evans. The Division was in the sector of the Line West of BELLENGLISE, which lies a short distance North of ST. QUENTIN, and is on the ST. QUENTIN CANAL. On September 18th the Australians had captured the first system of the German Defences, consisting of a double line of trenches about 3,000 yards West of the Canal. These trenches were now occupied by the Division, and were the jumping off point for the next attack. Between these trenches and the Canal were some isolated trenches not arranged in any completely connected system; and some 400 yards on the East of the Canal was the main HINDENBURG Trench. The next blow was intended to capture the Canal and the main trench. On the night of September 27th the 6th North Staffs. relieved the 4th Leicesters in some trenches, which they had taken that day, and on their right were the 5th South Staffords. On the following day at 10 a.m. the Germans made a heavy counter-attack on the 5th South Staffs., and on the men of "D" Company of the 6th North Staffs. on the right, commanded by Captain F. J. Newton, who were acting as outpost Company of the 6th North Staffs.

The outpost Company of the 5th South Staffs., which had been hard pressed for a considerable time, eventually had to give way, but "D" Company remained firm, keeping the Germans back with what little ammunition they had. When this was exhausted German bombs and rifles were used to hold the enemy off. A German Machine-gun had been captured the previous day, and Private Mountford, after getting it into working order, and collecting belts of German ammunition, mounted it on the parapet, and for five hours during the attack, under heavy fire, helped considerably in holding up the enemy. As soon as the attack commenced the telephone line to Battalion Headquarters was severed by the enemy artillery, and the news of the attack was brought by Corporal Washington and Private Green, who had to cross the open under heavy Machine-gun and rifle fire, as there were no communication trenches.



LIEUT. F. G. SAVAGE.



LIEUT. P. J. SCORE.



LIEUT. G. N. SCOTT.



LIEUT. P. N. SHELLEY.



LIEUT. G. W. S. SHERRATT, M.M.



LIEUT. C. L. SILVESTER.



LIEUT. B. A. SMITH.



LIEUT. H. E. SMITH.



LIEUT. W. SMITH.



LIEUT. L. C. SNELLING.



LIEUT. W. J. SPARROW.



LIEUT. R. SPRAGGINS.



LIEUT. H. STACEY.



LIEUT. A. E. STEARN, M.C.



LIEUT. F. T. SUDLOW.



LIEUT. E. S. W. THOMAS.

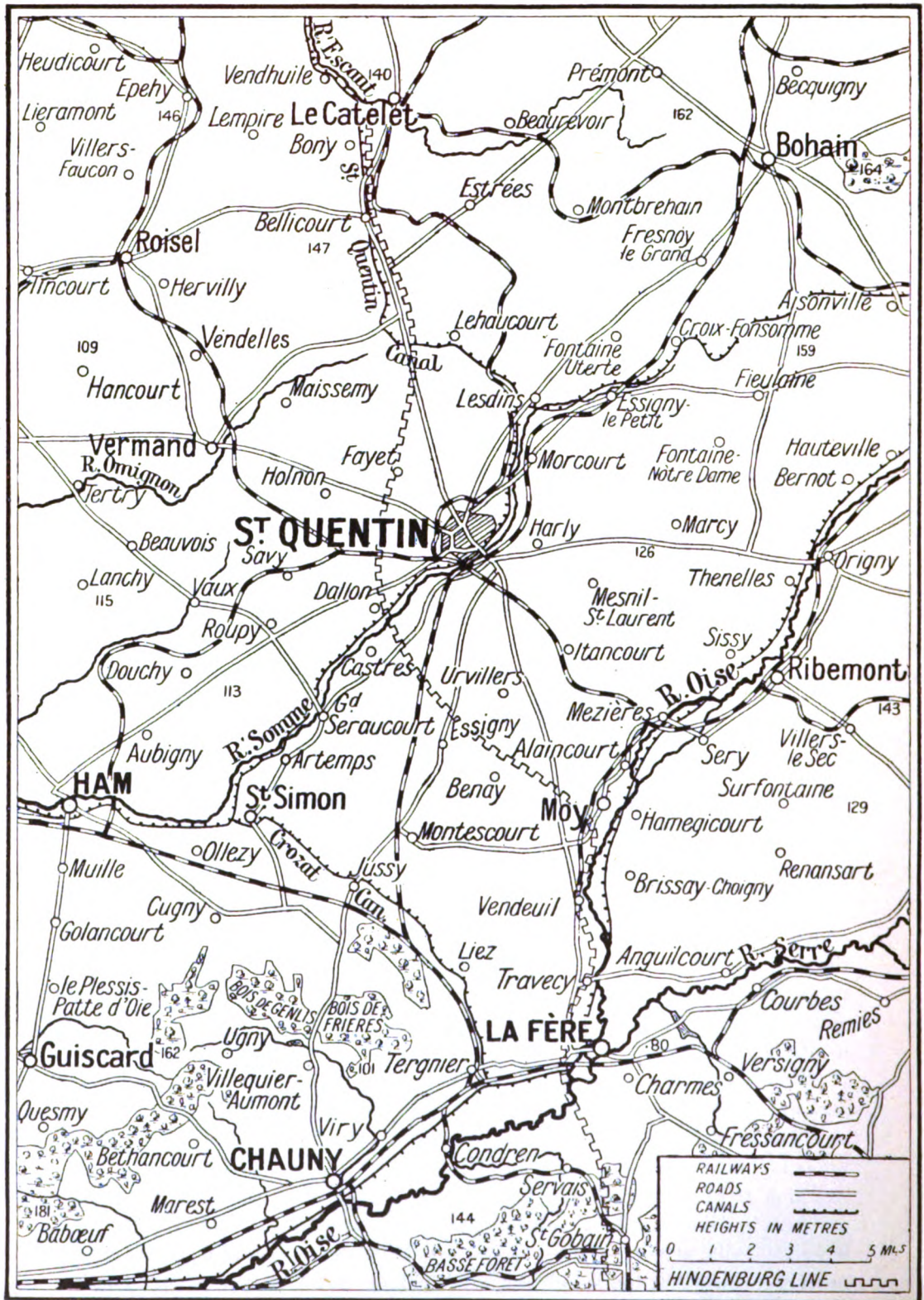
On receiving the information Colonel Evans immediately went forward with the Artillery Observation Officer to inquire into the situation. As a result a heavy barrage was brought to bear on the enemy positions, which checked them, as they were trying to outflank "D" Company. Whilst observing the effect of the artillery fire, Captain N. HIPKINS and Lieutenant W. PLANT were killed by a shell. Towards the afternoon the enemy activity had slackened down, but the position of "D" Company was very much exposed, and at dusk it was decided to withdraw the Company. During that night and in the early hours of the 19th preparations for the attack on the Canal were completed. As the Germans had on the previous day captured in the outpost trenches a number of scaling ladders, rafts, mats, and lifebelts, they must have been aware of what was going to take place.

The general idea of the proposed attack was to break the main HINDENBURG LINE North of ST. QUENTIN, the special rôle of the 46th Division being to storm the ST. QUENTIN CANAL at BELLENGLISE and further to the North. This Canal, after running South from BELLICOURT, has a sharp turn to the East at BELLENGLISE. On the right of the 46th the 1st Division were to advance to some high ground near THORIGNY, South of the bend, and not across the Canal, so as to cover the flank, and on the left the American Corps were to storm the defences of BELLICOURT, cross the Canal, and then, turning South, join up with the 46th Division. The 32nd Division and 2nd Australian Division, in case of success, were to pass through the 46th Division and 30th American Division, and attack the next objective. The defences in front of the 46th Division were of a very formidable nature, consisting of strong lines West of the Canal, then the Canal itself, and then the main HINDENBURG LINE with four strongly fortified villages. The Southern half of the Canal near BELLENGLISE runs practically along the ground level, and contains little water, but it was very strongly fortified. The Northern half towards BELLICOURT has a depth of seven to ten feet of water, and runs through a deep cutting with almost perpendicular sides, thirty to fifty feet high. The lower ten feet of the sides of the whole length of the Canal were faced with brick, and both banks were strongly wired. In BELLENGLISE were the entrances to a tunnel, which ran from the direction of MAGNY-LA-FOSSE on the East into the village itself, and was known to be capable of sheltering from 2,000 to 3,000 men.

The whole area was exceptionally strong in concrete Machine-gun defences, and was believed by the enemy to be impregnable.

The main difficulty lay in crossing the Canal, and for this purpose some 3,000 lifebelts were obtained from Channel leave-boats and issued to the storming troops, together with portable rafts, ladders, collapsible boats, mats, and heaving lines. These had been tested on the banks of the SOMME, and it was found that the ordinary lifebelt would easily support a man in fighting order, provided that the weight he was carrying was kept low on his body.





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With the object of ensuring that there should be little opposition on the West of the Canal, the 137th Brigade (Lincolns and Leicesters) had taken some trenches on September 27th under a heavy barrage, but, as already described, these had been retaken on the 28th. It was then decided that the troops should be withdrawn, and formed up quite clear of any possible enemy opposition.

Certain objectives were fixed upon and divided amongst the three Brigades; when the first Brigade had reached its objective, the second was to pass through and gain its objective, and then the third was to do likewise. Finally the 32nd Division was to pass through the 46th. This form of attack is known as "Leap Frog."

To the Stafford Brigade (137th), commanded by Brigadier-General J. V. Campbell, V.C., who had been with the Brigade since 1917, was entrusted the storming of the Canal, the village of BELLENGLISE, and the further position, the HINDENBURG TRENCH. On reaching this latter Line, a three hours' halt was to be made, to allow of the complete "mopping up" of the area, and give time for the Sherwood Brigade on the right and the Lincoln and Leicester Brigade on the left to come up and pass through. The stormers were to be assisted by a few sections of Engineers, and the 1st/1st Monmouthshire Regiment (Pioneers), with bridging material, and two additional Machine-gun Battalions. Two Companies of Tanks were to cross over the Canal Tunnel at BELLICOURT with the Americans, and then move South to their assistance.

On the night of September 28th the Division was successfully formed up. The Staffords were formed up on a three-Battalion front, the 6th South Staffs. were on the right, the 5th South Staffs. in the centre, and the 6th North Staffs. on the left. Each of these Battalions was on a two-Company front, and each Company on a two-platoon front, making four waves, and every man carried a lifebelt. The front Companies carried cables and ladders, and those behind carried collapsible boats. The Monmouthshire Battalion and the Engineers were close behind with the rafts and bridging material. The barrage was timed to leap forward 100 yards every four minutes, and was to play on the HINDENBURG TRENCH for twenty minutes. The crossing of the Canal was to be assisted by a Trench-Mortar barrage. The men were to attack in fighting order, without oil-sheets and puttees, and, in addition to the lifebelt, each man carried 120 rounds of ammunition and four bombs.

The two other Brigades were formed up some distance in the rear on a one-Battalion front.

The Brigade lined up on the tape at 5-20 a.m. on September 29th, and at 5-30 the barrage started. Zero, the hour of attack, was at 5-40, and immediately the advance commenced. There was then a thick mist, which rapidly increased to a dense fog, as the smoke, which had been placed in the barrage and on the flanks, began to make itself felt. The men had to advance about 2,000 yards before reaching the Canal, but the smoke and fog made it



impossible to see more than a few yards in front, and the direction had to be kept by compass. At the outset the enemy Machine-gun fire was troublesome, and, owing to the fog, it was impossible to locate the guns, until the men were on the top of them. After destroying these, there was not much serious opposition until the Canal was reached at 6-45. Here many Machine-gun nests were found, but these were soon "mopped up," the crews being captured or killed. During the advance control had been very difficult, and the men had pressed forward as best they could, through the enemy's wire and defences, and had broken up into little groups of two or three. The enemy was completely demoralised, and put up a very feeble resistance, as they had been badly shaken by the preceding bombardment, and the barrage and the fog prevented any cohesion.

Having stormed these first trenches and killed most of the garrison the Brigade had reached the Canal well up to time, and now had to get across it. The 6th South Staffs. on the right found little water in the Canal, and only in a few places were forced to swim. The enemy here at first put up considerable resistance, but, after a number of men had crossed, surrendered freely, and the Battalion was able to proceed to the next objective. They occupied the Tunnel entrances in BELLENGLISE, and captured some hundreds of prisoners. The 6th North Staffs. and the 5th South Staffs. found a considerable depth of water in the Canal. The officers, swimming over first with ropes, were soon joined by the leading lines of their men, and, assisted by broken bridges, rafts, and boats, the whole force was soon across, and dealing with the enemy in the strongly-held trenches on the Eastern bank.

By a stroke of good luck the 6th North Staffs. found the RIQUEVAL BRIDGE and several footbridges crossing the Canal intact. These bridges had been left by the enemy, to allow their men on the West bank to receive their supplies, and also in case of the need of retreat. The Germans made a desperate effort to destroy them, but did not succeed. Captain A. H. CHARLTON was in command of "B" Company in front of the RIQUEVAL BRIDGE. The approach to the bridge was guarded by a Machine-gun position. He and a party of nine men captured the gun and bayoneted all the crew; then, rushing on to the bridge, they killed the enemy guarding it, before they could fire the explosive charge. Captain CHARLTON then cut the leads to the explosive, and threw the charge into the Canal. The party then crossed the Canal, and, after driving out the enemy on the other side, secured the bridge-end. This bridge was subsequently known as "CHARLTON BRIDGE," and Captain CHARLTON received the D.S.O.

These exploits secured the crossing of the Canal, and the Brigade was soon in possession of the trenches beyond. Many prisoners were captured in dug-outs in the bed of the Canal, and near the bridge a Battalion Commander and his staff and 130 men were made prisoners. The time was now about 7-30. The next and last objective was the HINDENBURG TRENCH. Two



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THE ST. QUENTIN CANAL.  
Crossed by the 46th Division in life-belts.



Companies of the 6th North Staffs. now attacked, and, in spite of some Machine-gun fire, stormed the trench at 8-45. During these attacks they had captured two field-guns (the first ever taken by the 46th Division), several Machine-guns, and many prisoners. The two other Battalions were also successful, and the Stafford Brigade according to instructions consolidated their position. The casualties of the 6th North only amounted to 91, all told. Three officers, Captain F. J. Newton, Lieutenants C. B. E. King and E. W. Parkinson were wounded; 15 men were killed, 3 missing, and 70 wounded.

These casualties were *very* small, considering what had been done, and the enemy had suffered very heavy losses, both in men and material. The fog had been of great assistance in the first assault, as it had not lifted until late in the morning, and all the preparations had been very well arranged and carried out. A great deal was also due to the skill and bravery of the whole Brigade.

The 6th Division on the right had also been successful, and the Americans had crossed the Canal at BELLICOURT, allowing the two Companies of Tanks to cross the tunnel and join the 46th Division.

When it was known that the Canal had been crossed orders were issued for the 138th and 139th Brigades to advance and pass through the 137th Brigade, which they did, and at 12 noon they were joined by the Tanks, and attacked the next objective. The fog had now nearly cleared, and much inconvenience was caused to the Right Battalion of the 129th Brigade by the enemy occupying high ground to the South of the Canal. Machine-guns from this direction swept the right flank continuously, and enemy field-guns, firing at point-blank range, quickly put out of action all six Tanks allotted to the 139th Brigade. This Battery was in turn destroyed by a party of the Brigade, who with great gallantry recrossed the Canal, and shot or bayoneted the gunners. The advance continued, although, on learning that the Americans on the left had been held up, steps had to be taken to form a left defensive flank, and at 3 p.m. the whole of the Divisional objectives had been taken. The 32nd Division then passed through to continue the attack.

The 46th Division remained where they were during the night of September 29th, and the leading Battalions were continuously in action, owing to both flanks being open to the enemy. Next morning the 1st Division on the right, by capturing the high ground South of the Canal, eased the situation, and on the left, the 2nd Australian Division, pushing forward, joined up with the left flank during the day.

General Boyd, the 46th Divisional Commander, in his official report, after praising the Artillery, and other Units, says of the Infantry:—"As for the Infantry, in addition to the magnificent behaviour of every officer and man, the leadership shown by regimental officers and N.C.O.s was of a very high nature.

"The faultless leading of their men across some 5,000 yards of enemy territory, in a thick fog, during which some 4,200 prisoners and 70 guns were taken, is worthy of the highest traditions of the service. Their success, and the lightness of their casualties, some 800 in all, is due to this power of leadership, and to the fact that not the slightest hesitation was shown throughout the whole engagement."

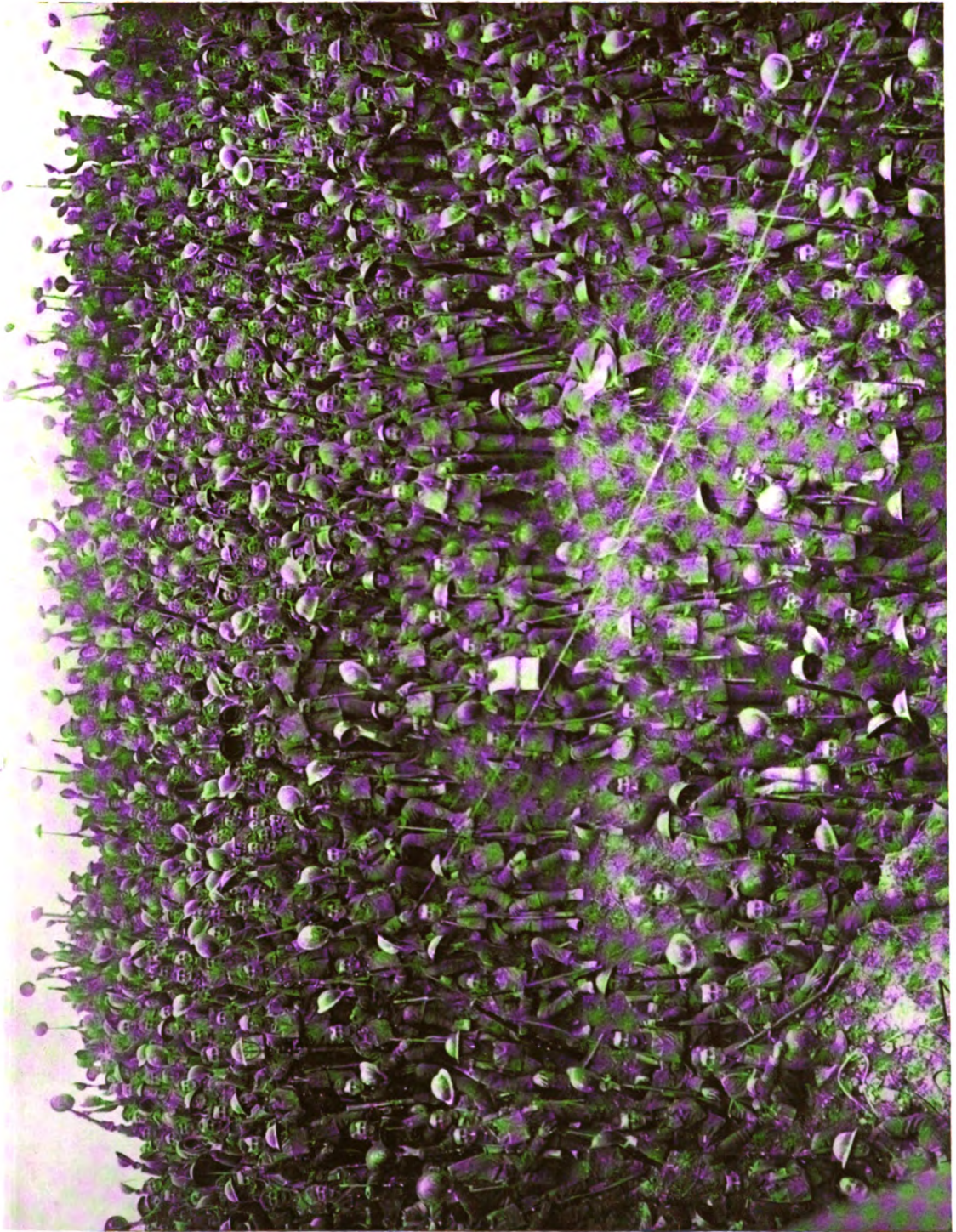
In Sir Douglas Haig's official report of September 30th he spoke of "this brilliant operation," and the *Daily Mail* (Mr. Beach Thomas) said that the 46th Division had done as big things as were ever done in the War. *The Times* of October 1st remarks: "Altogether it is surely as triumphant a performance as any Division has ever placed to its credit." Lord Dartmouth has specially congratulated the Staffs. Territorials on their exploit, which he said "is something of a record for a Division even in the present War." The Mayor of STOKE also sent his personal congratulations to the troops from North Staffordshire.

This victory of September 29th had broken the back of the HINDENBURG LINE, but there still remained another system of defences in the villages to the East. There was no Canal or river to cross here, but the position was strongly fortified and full of Machine-guns. At 4-30 p.m. on October 2nd orders were received at a Corps Conference, that the 46th Division was to attack and capture the village of MONTBREHAIN, and the Line to the South of it, as far as (though not including) the village of SEQUEHART. The Australians were to attack on the left, and the 32nd were on the right.

The 6th North Staffs. had passed the nights of September 29th and 30th in the position they had consolidated. On October 1st they advanced to another position, and passed the night there. They were still there on October 2nd, and were just settling down for dinner in the evening, when orders came that they were to move up and take up assembly positions East of LEVERGIES for another attack. They were to be in position by 5-20 a.m. on October 3rd. The Battalion fell in at 12-30 a.m., and, after a three miles' march, arrived at the assembly position at 4-40 a.m. The 139th Brigade was on the left, and the 137th on the right, with the 138th in Divisional Reserve. The 6th North Staffs. were on the left of their Brigade, and next to them on their right were the 6th South Staffs., and on their left were the 6th Sherwood Foresters. There were also several Tanks to help in the operations.

The barrage commenced at 6 a.m. on October 3rd, and was immediately followed by the attack. The 137th Brigade at first advanced with little opposition, but, on reaching the main line of defence, brisk fighting took place. After a stubborn resistance the enemy were driven back with heavy losses, and a large number of prisoners were sent back. The Brigade then headed for MANNEQUIN HILL, a low ridge, which was their final objective. It was defended by a large number of Machine-guns, and many of them were on the





ACROSS THE ST. QUENTIN CANAL.

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flank and enfilading the men. In spite of these the Brigade pressed forward, stormed the last position, and completed their task.

The 139th Brigade had also been victorious, the Division on their left had been unable to break through the very strong defences opposed to them, and the Brigade had to send out two Companies to protect their left flank. They then occupied the village of RAMICOURT, and, passing through it, after some heavy fighting, captured their objective, the village of MONTBREHAIN, where over 1,000 prisoners and a battery of field-guns were taken. They also found in these two villages 70 French civilians, kept there by the Germans. Two Companies of Tanks helped largely in this victory. One of these Tanks attacked a Machine-gun nest, containing 16 guns, and killed all the crews, before it was in its turn disabled.

It was now 10-30 a.m. and a severe defeat had been inflicted on the enemy, and the whole of the objectives of the 46th Division obtained. The Division had captured 2,000 prisoners, some field-guns, and a large number of Machine-guns.

The two Divisions on the flanks had not been quite so successful, and consequently the 46th Division had its flanks exposed in case of a counter-attack. The Germans made this counter-attack at 1-30 p.m., and, in spite of heavy artillery fire from the big guns, and point-blank fire from the field-guns and Machine-guns, they made a gap in the defence South of MONTBREHAIN. This compelled a slight withdrawal, and the abandonment of the village. The 138th Brigade now moved forward, and an advance of the Australian Division on the left eased the situation, and the counter-attack was repulsed.

Later in the afternoon another counter-attack was made on the 137th Brigade on MANNEQUIN HILL, and they were forced off the slopes. The Brigade, helped by the Fifth Cavalry Brigade and the IX. Corps Cyclists, counter-attacked in their turn and regained some of the slopes, but it was found impossible to retain the summit of the hill, which was swept by Machine-gun fire.

In this fighting the 6th North Staffs. suffered heavy casualties, and in the afternoon Colonel EVANS was killed, and Major C. C. Dowding, D.S.O., M.C., attached to the 1st/5th South Staffs., assumed command. Three other officers, Lieutenants F. E. BURT, W. J. A. ENSOR, and F. E. BRINDLEY were killed, and four wounded. The losses amongst the men were 21 killed, 15 missing, and 143 wounded.

The Division retained the Line during the whole of the 4th of October under continuous enemy pressure, and in the evening they were relieved by the Australians and the 1st Division. The 6th North Staffs. went back to ASCENSION VALLEY, West of the ST. QUENTIN CANAL, for reorganisation and a rest.

There had been many acts of gallantry during the fighting on October 3rd. One of the stretcher-bearers, L/Corporal W. H. COLTMAN, who had already

gained the D.C.M. and M.M., was awarded the V.C. for his gallantry in bringing in the wounded from badly exposed positions on MANNEQUIN HILL. He went out several times, in spite of the fact that the ground was swept by bullets. He was the first man in the 6th North Staffs. to gain this distinction. Captain CHARLTON again distinguished himself, and was awarded the M.C. Two field-guns were holding up the Line on the right. He brought up his Company Lewis-Guns so as to enfilade the guns, which were afterwards captured, as well as a nest of Machine-guns.

So far as this action concerned the 46th Division the fighting was now complete. The fighting had been of the heaviest nature, and the casualties were very numerous, including 100 officers, five of whom were Battalion commanders. The captures amounted to some 2,000 prisoners, and a battery of guns.

Between the 29th day of September and the 6th of October the 46th Division had fought two general engagements, and had captured a fortified area between its original Line West of the Canal and RAMICOURT, on a front never less than 4,000 yards. During these operations, in spite of the fact that both its flanks were continuously in the air, it had captured and maintained all objectives, with the exception of the village of MONTBREHAIN. Six thousand prisoners had been taken, and over 70 guns, and Machine-guns too numerous to count, at a loss to the Division of some 2,500 men.

Between October 3rd and November 11th the 6th North Staffs. had had some more fighting. On October 10th they left their billets in BOHAIN, where they had been in reserve since October 8th, and took up their assembly positions on the edge of RIQUEVAL Wood. Their task was to push strong patrols through the wood, and afterwards to get in touch with the Brigade on their left and the French on their right.

At 5-20 a.m. on October 11th our barrage commenced, and 15 minutes later the enemy barrage came down. There were many gas-shells, which compelled the Battalion to use gas-helmets. Strong patrols were pushed into the wood, and, after overcoming the opposition of snipers and Machine-guns, they reached the other side of the wood at 12-45 p.m. The Battalion then pushed on through another wood, and joined up with the French. During the day 26 prisoners, 2 field-guns, 4 trench-mortars, and 5 Machine-guns were captured, and the Battalion had two men killed and six wounded. Later on they were brought back into support, where they were on October 16th. They were very short of officers, though fairly strong in other ranks. The officers consisted of the Colonel, one Captain, and four Lieutenants, including the Adjutant. The other Battalions in the Division were also badly in need of reinforcements and rest, and only took a small part in the final operations.

It was nearly three years since this same Division, on October 13th, 1915, had made its first great attack on the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT, and had been driven back with such heavy losses. During these three years they had

frequently received other heavy blows, and now at last the hour of Victory had come. They had captured a part of the great HINDENBURG LINE, the last hope of Germany. This Victory was only one of many gained by the Allies during these months, and everywhere the German Army was in retreat, broken and beaten. The German Allies, too, were defeated. The Turks had been overwhelmed in PALESTINE, the Bulgarians in the BALKANS, and the Austrians in ITALY. Under these circumstances the War ended almost as suddenly as it had begun. The German Emperor and the Crown Prince fled into Holland, and the new Government demanded an Armistice. On November 11th, 1918, the Armistice was signed, and the fighting ceased on all fronts at 11 a.m.

When the Armistice was signed the 46th Division had been away from ENGLAND for over three years and eight months. They had come out early in 1915, an unknown Division of Territorials, but, by their splendid prowess during these three years, they had made the 46th Division one of the most famous Divisions of the British Army.

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### ARMISTICE DAY, 1918 (November 11th).

(Addressed to Fallen Comrades by an Officer of the 5th North,  
who prefers to be anonymous).

So—it is over. We survivors stand  
Dazed with the quiet, limp without the strain  
Of those tense years, lost in the sudden gain  
Of ends forgotten in the fierce demand  
The striving for them made on mind and hand.  
Now, for the first time capable of pain,  
Heed we the nagging trouble that the brain  
Ignored, while still the anxious hours it planned.

Almost unnoted in the fray your fall  
Save for the sense of tried, and wanted aid  
(The moment's clamorous need o'er-ruling all).

O friends, forgive the tribute left unpaid!  
Haply you had not cared one thought to call  
From tasks wherein such sacrifice you made.

## CHAPTER XII.

## SOME ADVENTURES OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE TERRITORIALS.

SINCE October, 1915, the Reserve Battalions in ENGLAND had been sending out drafts of both men and officers, and after 1916 there had been only one Battalion to do this, the 3rd/5th North Staffs. When in 1917 there were four Battalions in FRANCE the work of despatching reinforcements had been very hard, and there was no check in 1918, after the disbanding of the 1st/5th N. Staffs. and the 59th Division, for drafts were supplied to other North Staffordshire Battalions. The officers and men were also scattered, and not only were they serving in many Units in ENGLAND and FRANCE, but in INDIA, MESOPOTAMIA, EGYPT, SALONIKA, PALESTINE, and AFRICA. The 3rd/5th were at MABLETHORPE from May, 1917, until they were disbanded in 1919, so that that place almost became their home, and there were many scenes of farewell at the small station near the camp. The greatest effort was made in April, 1918, when the Germans made their last great offensive. On April 1st, Easter Monday, a draft left for the 1st North Staffs., composed of every available N.C.O. and man—many with two or three blue chevrons, and two or three wound stripes. All leave had been stopped, and, though the men could not say good-bye to their families, they went away with cheerful goodwill.

Colonel Blizzard remained in command of the 3rd/5th for four years, from its birth to its death, and it was very largely owing to him that there was such goodwill and fellowship amongst all, both officers and men.

During this period, that is, from the formation of the Battalion until the 1st of May, 1919, 378 officers and 5,584 men were sent over seas. Most of these went to the North Staffordshire Territorials, but large numbers were drafted to other Units as required. Both men and officers used to write letters to Colonel Blizzard, giving descriptions of their adventures, and some of these are most interesting. Also when they returned to MABLETHORPE, Colonel Blizzard would always see them, and hear their stories. He also received many official documents and maps. It is mainly due to these that it has been possible to write this brief sketch. Many letters have been already included in the preceding chapters, but a few which do not relate directly to the history describe the adventures of some of those who prided themselves on still belonging to the North Staffs.

Lance-Corporal Redfern was with the 2nd/6th North Staffs. on March 21st, 1918, and was one of those taken prisoner. He was with a party, which was completely surrounded, and compelled to surrender. He writes:—"After handing over our arms several of us were sent to bring in the wounded from the Battlefield. Meantime the majority of the enemy continued to advance towards MORY, leaving a few men to guard the prisoners. It was very noticeable, that when the Boche captured us, they were allowed to loot, going round

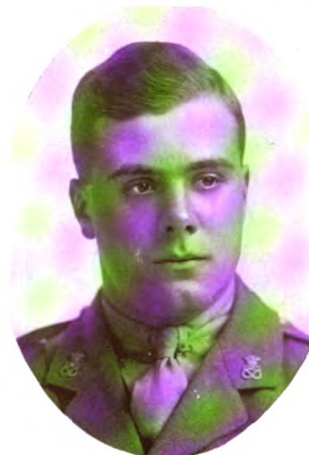




LIEUT. C. F. THOMPSON, M.C.



LIEUT. J. B. THOMPSON.



LIEUT. A. J. TODD.



LIEUT. J. TOWNSEND.



LIEUT. R. M. TRIMBLE.



LIEUT. F. R. TUNNICLIFFE.



LIEUT. R. A. VARLEY.



LIEUT. H. A. WAREHAM.



LIEUT. A. C. WATKIN.



LIEUT. H. A. WATSON.



LIEUT. H. E. WATSON.



LIEUT. H. ST. J. B. WATSON, M.C.



LIEUT. W. H. C. WAYTE.



LIEUT. H. D. WEBB.



LIEUT. C. H. WHITFIELD.



LIEUT. D. R. WILDBLOOD.

the cookhouses, eating our breakfast, dinner, and tea rations, and pillaging the stores and canteen. Next day we had to remove our badly wounded from a dug-out to sandbagged shelters above ground, where they were continually under shell fire, and one or two of these shelters were blown in, resulting in the death of some of the wounded. The dug-out was then used for the Boche wounded, who were streaming up in large numbers from the direction of MORV. In the afternoon another prisoner and myself were sent with two Germans, and an improvised stretcher, made of a blanket and two poles, to carry a wounded Boche down the line to a village in the rear. Whilst I was carrying this wounded man a German officer came up, and took my leather jerkin, remarking that it was a very nice one. During the night and the next day we were continually sent up the line to bring in the wounded. We had had no food all this time, except a few biscuits and some tinned meat, which we had found on some of the dead. We took the wounded to a temporary hospital, about seven miles in the rear, which was crowded out. Having been given a few minutes' rest I tried to sleep, but found the cold was too intense, and so was compelled to walk about until the dawn broke, to keep myself warm. Early next morning three of us were sent to fetch more wounded. One of the others was so exhausted from want of food that we had to leave him behind in a trench. On getting back several of us asked for food, and were told that we must wait, as they had not any to spare. However, at dinner time, we had a kind of stewed cereal with a little horse-flesh, in any old tin we could find, the first food I had had from them since I had been captured three days ago. In the afternoon a party of about 200 of us went up the line again, and carried a great number of Boche and our own wounded to a Hospital in a village 12 miles away.

"We arrived at the Hospital about 9 p.m. and were billeted in the village Church, which had wire beds. Whilst we were in this Church the men, who had candles, lit them. In the night we heard the sound of several explosions, and immediately the German guard rushed into the Church, shouted out something which we did not understand, and then put out the candles. We then realised that our night 'planes were over us, and, having seen the lights, were dropping bombs.

"Next morning we found that the village was inhabited by French civilians, who smuggled in to us some food and coffee, and we gave them souvenirs. They told us that they had great difficulty in obtaining food, and were only allowed a certain amount. At 9 a.m. we marched to a village four miles nearer the line, and taken to a barbed wire cage. Several officers in red banded hats took our photographs, and inside the cage one of them picked out two of the oldest men in our party, who had been working in one of the Labour Battalions, and two of the youngest youths, and made them take their hats off, and sit side by side. He then took their photograph; it was probably to make the German public believe that our Army was reduced to old men

and boys. Afterwards we were searched, and all private letters, knives, razors, and printed matter were taken from us. Our gas helmets were taken from us, and the tin containers cut from the rubber portion and dumped, while the rubber was gathered together to send to Germany. Our field dressings also were taken, and used for his own troops, as the only dressing he had was a substitute manufactured from wood pulp or paper. There was no hut in the cage, and we had to sleep out in the open that night. Next day some picks and shovels arrived, and we dug some holes in the ground, in which we slept.

"This cage, in which we remained for several days, was about 250 yards long, and 200 yards wide. We were turned out in the mornings at 4 a.m., and, if we were slow in getting into the ranks, we received a blow from the rifle of one of the guards. We had a pint of black coffee without sugar or milk, and after marching seven or eight kilometres were working on the roads at 7 a.m. Our work consisted of repairing the roads, carrying shells and burying horses, which had been dead several months. We usually worked on the roads in company with a German labour party and an armed guard. At 3 p.m. we returned to camp and then had our only meal of the day, which consisted of one pint of stewed barley with a little horse-flesh, and a quarter of a loaf of black bread, which was very sour. The sanitary conditions of the camp were very bad, and there was no accommodation for washing, and after a shower of rain the dug-outs were swamped out. The number of prisoners increased from 200 to 1,400. Later on two huts were built large enough to hold 400 men, and the remainder had to sleep in the dug-outs, which were more comfortable in the dry weather, as there was more room. Often we were out all day in the rain and got wet through, as our coats had been taken away for the German wounded. We all suffered badly from the cramp from the wet and the bad food, and many men fell sick. If the men complained they were put on the hardest work, and all our N.C.O.s had to do the same work as the privates.

"The Germans appeared to have plenty of guns, ammunition, and men; the first day after my captivity I saw some large guns in a field, and they had no camouflage whatever. Most of the Germans to whom we spoke and who understood English told us that they had come from the Russian front, and that they were going to do the same with us that they had done with ITALY; they would keep on advancing to separate the British from the French; the French would then surrender and the British would have to leave FRANCE.

"Frequently they told us that they had captured ARRAS and AMIENS, and that the War would be over in four months. When we asked them about AMERICA they always treated her with disdain. They believed that GERMANY had to start the War, as she was surrounded by enemies, and that the *Lusitania* was sunk because she was carrying arms and ammunition.

"The German Transport caused us much amusement. There was no standard type of vehicle, and donkeys, and all kinds of horses were used to pull anything that would carry the slightest thing. The horses must have been badly fed and overworked, to judge from their condition, and the number of dead lying at the sides of the road. Often have I seen one of our men receive a scowl and a sharp word from the guard for laughing when a donkey went by drawing a small cart with a barrel filled with water, or two Staff Officers drove past in a landau drawn by two broken-down horses. They had very little motor transport, and what there was had no rubber on the wheels, but just metal, which made a terrible mess of the roads.

"The German soldiers were heartily fed up with the War, and cursed Lloyd George for the blockade, as it affected their food supplies, and they were not half so well fed as the British soldiers. Often have I seen them busy cutting meat off a horse, which had been shot. Our own men did the same, when they had a chance, sometimes cutting flesh off a horse that had been dead for weeks, and as a result several of them had dysentery. We frequently passed through ploughed fields, where cabbages had been growing, and we gathered some, and ate them raw as we marched to work. The Germans would dig to the bottom of all our old shelters, which had been blown in by shells, in the hope of finding some tinned beef. I have seen one of our own men give ten shillings for a tin of beef. At night the German soldiers would gather round our cage, and try and persuade us to exchange our valuables for a few cigarettes, German money, and very occasionally bread, which always commanded a high price, such as a watch or gold ring.

"On April 7th 750 of us were marched to ECOUST, near which I had been captured. I here determined to try and escape, as the conditions of the cage were worse than the last. There was only one hut, which was raised off the ground, and had a broken floor. We were well within range of our own artillery, and in case of gas-shells would have had no chance without our helmets. The camp was deep in mud, and the vermin gave us little rest. When we complained of the latter the Sergeant-Major told us that, if we buried our clothes in the ground, the vermin would leave them, but did not say what we should wear during the experiment. We were treated more brutally than ever, and were not allowed to rest when working, nor to write home.

"We often saw German soldiers march by dressed in British overcoats, puttees, and steel helmets. They were greatly worried, especially at night, by our aeroplanes, which caused much damage to their transport, as we learnt, since we had to bury the dead horses. One day our artillery began shelling a so-called hospital near our cage. It consisted of about 15 marquee-tents, all flying the red-cross flag, and with a big red cross on the ground. We knew that the 'hospital' was a complete farce, as we had helped to store food and ammunition in the tents.



"I tried to persuade some of the men to try and escape with me, but they thought the risk was too great. Eventually I met a Sergeant in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, who also wanted to escape, and we agreed to try together. We arranged to make the attempt at 9 p.m. one evening when the guards were making the prisoners go into their dug-outs for the night, as no one was allowed to walk about in the cage after dark. The Sergeant happened to find some dumped German clothes, which we put on, and I had a small store of horse-flesh which I had cooked.

"At 9 p.m., whilst the guard was engaged at the other end of the cage, we crept underneath the wire and crawled into a thicket about 80 yards away, and lay there for half an hour, until it was quite dark. We could plainly see the Verey Lights going up, and we decided to make for the nearest one. We had a supper on half our horse-flesh, and then crept through the thicket. We seemed to make a great noise, as we cracked the twigs underneath our bodies, and several times we stopped, thinking that some sentry would hear us. When we reached the outskirts of the wood, we thought it best to walk forward boldly to avoid suspicion, in case we were seen, and we passed through the outskirts of the village of ECOUST. We met several Germans, but they never suspected us, and we followed the road in the direction of MORV for half an hour. We then left the road to avoid the sentries, and took to the fields, where we had great difficulty in getting through the barbed wire put there by our own men.

"We made good progress, and had very good luck, although we fell into trenches or shell-holes half-filled with water, always making for the nearest Verey Light. Once we came upon a transport parked for the night, and also on a gun-post for defence against aircraft, but luckily the men in charge of the gun had considered the night unfavourable for attack and gone away for a sleep. We must have added miles to our journey by walking round batteries, which we could see in action, and avoiding all lights and sunken roads, where German troops were likely to be quartered.

"As we neared the Verey Lights we proceeded more cautiously, as we expected to come across the Reserve Line. Luckily we were guided by one of their own men, who must have had a very irritable cough, for we heard him coughing five or six hundred yards away. We kept well to the left of him and advanced towards some ruins, where we could hear Machine-guns firing. As we were crawling through these ruins, which were those of one of our old camps, a man stumbled by us carrying a piece of metal sheeting, probably to make a shelter from the rain. We crossed over barbed wire or crept underneath it, and then crossed over a deep sunken road, which we afterwards learnt was the main road from ARRAS to BAPAUME. We here found ourselves on a level with a Machine-gun outpost, and we could hear the gunner moving the belt through his gun.

"We now had to go very cautiously, from fear of being seen by these gunners or coming across the main trenches. After crawling about 300 yards





LIEUT. R. H. WILKS.



LIEUT. G. E. E. WILLIAMS.



LIEUT. P. E. WILLIAMS.



LIEUT. V. E. N. WILLIAMS.



LIEUT. O. WILSON.



LIEUT. E. W. WITTERING.



LIEUT. B. C. WOOD.



LIEUT. C. L. WOOD.



LIEUT. L. T. WOOD.



LIEUT. R. C. M. WOOD.



LIEUT. R. H. WOOD.



LIEUT. C. A. WOODGER.



LIEUT. W. WOODWARD.



LIEUT. B. GREEN, M.C.



LIEUT. W. HAYWARD, M.C.



L. CORPL. W. H. COLTMAN,  
V.C. D.C.M., M.M.

we dropped into a very wide trench, which was unoccupied, which rather puzzled us, as we expected to find the German front Line trench. As Verey Lights were going up all around us we knew we were in No Man's Land. We climbed out of the trench and crawled under two lines of barbed wire entanglements, having to stop several times when the lights went up. After passing the second line of wire we saw a party of troops coming out of a trench in front of us, and noticed that they wore the clothes of British soldiers.

"When they were within eight yards of us, we heard an officer say in English, 'Have you detailed those men off, Corporal?' We at once jumped up and shouted, 'Don't fire, we're British!' and luckily for us no one did fire, as we were by the side of them before they could think what to do.

"We were marched back under escort, and, when we had proved our identity, we were given biscuits, tinned beef, and rum, which we devoured ravenously. We found the Line was held by the 1st Grenadier Guards, and was about three miles from ARRAS. After spending a week in FRANCE, and being questioned by various Intelligence Departments, we were sent back to ENGLAND. We gave evidence before a Committee of the House of Lords on the treatment of Prisoners of War, and then had two months' leave."

This is one of the few cases in which a prisoner escaped, but, generally speaking, the officers and men remained in Germany until after the Armistice. Their condition was frequently very bad, and many would not have lived had they not received their parcels from home. Many owe their lives to the Staffordshire people, who, with the help of Miss R. Harrison, of Maer Hall, sent out those parcels.

A short description of his imprisonment by Lieutenant C. W. Whitehurst will show the kind of existence endured by officers. This officer was with the 1st/6th North Staffs. in their attack on GOMMECOURT on July 1st, 1916. He was lucky enough to reach the enemy's wire, which he found uncut, and had with him only two or three men of his platoon. It was hopeless to think of attacking the Germans, so they took what cover they could, waiting for reinforcements. These never came, and, at 7-30 p.m., after they had thrown all the bombs they had, the Germans came out and took them prisoners. They were taken back, and finally, after many discomforts and hardships in various places and camps, some of them arrived at a camp in the moors of HANOVER. Lieut. Whitehurst says:—"It consisted of some very temporary wooden huts, surrounded by two very smelly pools. The commandant was a very ancient individual, who was a real strafer, and immediately commenced storming and shouting at us, as only a Hun can. He had the surprise of his life when we all stood up and shouted at him. It was his first experience of British officers, and he could not make us out at all. We were in small rooms with seven officers to a room. The mattresses were stuffed with old bread cards and filthy newspapers, and inhabited by all sorts of creeping things.

"There were five or six tunnels made, but unfortunately all were discovered, usually when the Hun was searching for something else. The huts were lighted by oil lamps, and the weekly oil ration was barely sufficient for three evenings, and usually we had only sufficient fuel for three or four hours daily. This was in the depth of winter, when the camp was knee deep in mud and snow." He was moved subsequently to another camp, and at last, on May 11th, 1917, he was told that he was to be exchanged and would leave the same day. Passing through AACHEN he arrived in HOLLAND, where he was very kindly received and interned at SCHWENIGEN.

Lieutenant Stansby, also of the 1st/6th, was captured in a similar manner on July 1st, 1916. As he was wounded he was sent to a Hospital. The food was scanty, but the doctors and sisters did their best for them, and the greatest care was taken when they were on the operating table. Subsequently he went to other hospitals, where the conditions were not very comfortable, and there was not much food, especially for the men. The latter received 320 grammes of black bread a day, a small portion of jam, half a litre of coffee substitute, vegetable stew and potatoes, at mid-day, and a bowl of thin soup in the evening. To help the men the officers gave what they could, and when the news reached the men's camps at LANGENSALZA and GOTTINGEN they sent all they could spare of their home stores, and undoubtedly saved the lives of a number of the badly wounded.

When the surface of his wound was healed, on November 15th, 1916, Lieut. Stansby was sent to a camp, where he had the usual experiences, and depended for his food largely on home parcels. The officers did what they could to gain amusement out of concerts and games. At the AUGUSTABAD camp they were allowed to keep tame rabbits and guinea pigs. The rabbits were very plentiful, and they ate them as a welcome change from tinned food. They managed to gather plenty of green food for them daily whilst on walks, and were able to buy a certain amount of hay and roots. There was some waste ground in the camp, and this was turned into small garden plots.

The camp officials were fairly reasonable, until, after a few escapes, a new Commandant arrived. There was a great struggle for about a month with him, and he abolished most of the privileges, but finally had to give in. There were searches, snap roll-calls at odd hours, and nightly visitations. The guards were mostly elderly Landsturm men, and unobjectionable, but some of the *Unter-offiziers* caused considerable annoyance.

On December 8th, 1917, a party of those who had been prisoners for more than 18 months were sent to a collecting camp at SCHWEIDNITZ in SILESIA. They went by train to BERLIN, which they crossed on foot on a Sunday afternoon, and there they had their only meal on the journey, namely, a cup of coffee substitute. They then had a night in the train, which had no heating, and they suffered terribly from the cold. The brightest spot on the journey was a halt at a small station, where they were allowed to improve their



circulation by tramping up and down the platform, also to procure hot water for a drink from the engine. They reached their destination at 8 o'clock in the morning. The camp had formerly been an *Arbeitshaus*, i.e., a kind of reformatory prison, and here they were on the whole well treated, though the life was rough. On May 11th, 1917, Lieutenant Stansby, with other officers, was exchanged, and, after a slow journey, on May 16th they crossed the Dutch frontier.

We have another interesting account of his experiences from P. B. Ross, Lieut. 1st/5th North Staffordshire Regt., taken prisoner of war on July 1st, 1917, in LENS, who writes the following:—

"After being taken at about 1 p.m. on July 1st I was marched, with Lieut. R. F. Johnson, and about 70 other ranks, about six miles back, and then locked up in a schoolroom for several hours, and we were then fortunate enough to get a motor lorry to DOUAI, where I saw the last of the men.

"Johnson and I were placed in a room at the top of the Banque de France. The building had been hit two or three days before by one of our long distance guns, and was considerably damaged.

"We got no food that day at all; luckily Johnson had a few biscuits.

"After four days at DOUAI we went by train, 3rd class, and very hard, to KARLSRUHE, via VALENCIENNES, BRUSSELS, NAMUR, METZ and STRASSBURG. It took us from 4 p.m., Friday, to 10-30 a.m. Sunday (8th).

"KARLSRUHE camp was in the main square of the town, we were there for seven or eight days, and were then moved to FREIBURG, with 70 others, six hours' journey, and quite comfortable.

"FREIBURG camp was in part of the old university buildings in the centre of the town, the buildings were old and solid, good in winter, but only a courtyard 52 by 48 yards for exercise in the centre of the building.

"At first we only got out for one hour once a week, but after complaints to the Dutch minister, &c., we got more walks.

"During the 16 months I was there, numerous escapes were effected, although no one actually got over the frontier.

"There was always a supply of compasses, maps, and civilian clothing in the camps, which the German Authorities never seemed to find, although they had searches after each escape.

"These searches always took place immediately after an escape, so everything was hidden. Maps were nailed under tables, compasses put in teapots, which were placed on tables, and looked very innocent; civilian clothing was kept under a loose board in one of the rooms.

"I am afraid some of this clothing was pinched. If a workman left a cap about, it usually found its way to this loose board.

"Another time the German Authorities were putting large arc lamps in the courtyard, and left a large coil of wire in the dinner hour. It was gone when they returned, someone thought it might be useful for escaping.

"There was a hunt for it, but I fancy they forgot to look up a certain chimney.

"Just before the March push we had only about 120 in the camp instead of 180, and, as it was cold, most of the spare beds were used as firewood, and, when the Germans took stock before the new arrivals came, they could not make out where all the spare beds had gone. Much cross-questioning took place, but we all looked very innocent and unintelligent.

"There was a regular system of punishment, varying from two days to fourteen days in cells; but as these were quite warm, there was usually a waiting list, as some men liked to go there for a day or two's peace and quiet.

"One did not get one's parcels in the cells, but food used to get to them in all sorts of ways.

"We got our parcels very well at FREIBURG.

"There were 15 others in my room. It was so crowded we had to double deck our beds to give us floor space for meals, &c.

"We had one very narrow escape of being bombed by our own people, two large bombs dropping ten yards from the camp and smashing many windows.

"Soap was an excellent means of getting things which were forbidden, a cake of 'Pears' or 'Vinolia' was the means of obtaining a bedroom ewer of beer.

"Also on one occasion (a 21st birthday) a rather thin, underfed-looking chicken was obtained (a great event).

"I believe the payment for this was 10 or 12 marks, two pieces of soap,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of tea, and two packets of cocoa.

"Another time we had the German papers stopped (we were always allowed these), because we made a demonstration when LILLE fell, and the Authorities could not understand why the camp knew all the news just the same. Cake of soap trick again, held a piece up to a certain sentry, and said, 'Zeitung, ja?' and it came.

"During the first month I was there, a German came to the camp on a real pneumatic-tyred 'push-bike,' probably the only one in BADEN except for Military use.

"He was in the camp about half an hour. When he returned there must have been some 12 to 15 punctures of different sizes, because the camp got wind of the bike being there, and everyone who passed gave the tyres a friendly dig with a knife or fork. He never brought it again.

"I was not surprised at times that we were not very popular.

"We had an entertainment of some sort about every 14 to 21 days. There was plenty of talent in the camp."

Many of the North Staffs. officers and men were sent out to the East, and had most interesting experiences. One of these was Lieutenant George Savage, who was an original member of the 3rd/5th, and was with the 1st/5th



in FRANCE in 1916. He left ENGLAND in August, 1917, for INDIA, and arrived at TARANTO in ITALY without adventure. On leaving TARANTO the transport, in which he was, was rammed by one of the escorting destroyers, and had a hole knocked in her bow. She was, however, able to proceed on her voyage, and arrived next morning at a harbour in ALBANIA, near CORFU, where she lay two days on account of enemy submarines. She stole out again at night under the escort of cruisers and destroyers, and finally arrived safely at PORT SAID.

From there he sailed to BASRA, and then went up the river in another steamer to the base camp with 14 men from the 5th North. The heat was terrific, and no work could be done between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., and there were many deaths from heat stroke. He left for BOMBAY, on September 15th on the *Edavana*, and had an adventurous voyage, which he thus described in a letter:—"September 20th—*Edavana* took fire 300 miles from BOMBAY—Incendiary Bomb—nearest ship 200 miles away—got off in rafts and spent night on sea—picked up next day by three ships, and afterwards transferred to Hospital ship, *Madras*—arrived BOMBAY September 22nd—all kit lost."

On arriving in INDIA he was sent to BANGALORE to a depôt for recruits for MESOPOTAMIA. Life at BANGALORE is thus described:—"Everything tip top, like peace time. There is no War on here. Only parade 8-30 to 12 noon—Tennis—Billiards—Bridge, and sports of all kinds—Fine climate like ENGLAND. Have a large furnished tent to myself. The only war here is against mosquitoes."

After some weeks at BANGALORE, he was sent again to MESOPOTAMIA to his Battalion, at RAMADI on the EUPHRATES, about 80 miles from BAGHDAD, where they were the most advanced on the front:—"We live in tents with just room to sleep in, and there are 20 men in the tent. It is terribly cold with 6 to 8 degrees of frost every night, and all the water is frozen hard. To-day breakfasts were late, because it took so long to thaw the dixies. We spend most of our time digging trenches, or else on outpost duty. We don't get many luxuries out here, as we are so far from the base, and it is difficult to get up the bare necessities. It is a God-forsaken country. As soon as you leave the river you are in the desert. The only water fit to drink is from the river, and the inland lakes are all salt. It took me six weeks to get here from BOMBAY, and the last 80 miles had to be done on foot. It takes eight weeks for a letter to arrive here from ENGLAND."

In June, 1918, he was transferred to another Battalion on the TIGRIS front, and a few days later was appointed a "Harvest Officer," and sent to HILLA. "I found my job was to go with four white men to a village twenty miles from anywhere, billet myself on the Sheiks, and then go about the country persuading the Arabs to bring in their grain, for which they are paid. The only drawback is that some of the Arabs have a nasty habit of murdering

officers. Five disappeared last winter in this area. HILLA is only a few miles from the ruins of BABYLON and the tower of BABEL.

"When I arrived at HILLA I was told to take 25 men with one month's rations, and go and open up grain collecting centres in the JARBUIYAH area. This is a small district of 1,000 square miles, where no British had ever been, except passing through, and where even the Turks dared not go with an army. Incidentally this area had been left until the last, because the Political officers thought it unsafe.

"I made my Headquarters at JARBUIYAH, and soon got things going. Here I have ten men, and employ 100 coolies. We have a big mud enclosure, and the Arabs bring in the grain on camels, and we send it on to HILLA. I have three other centres which I have to inspect. To get about I have a grey Arab stallion, a Ford motor for the only road to HILLA, and a motor launch. I have to feed, clothe, and doctor all the men, and provide all stores. We use 40,000 sacks weekly, and, at one centre alone, take 75 tons of grain daily, and have 1,500 tons in stock. We are up with the sun, and work until 11 a.m., and again from 4 p.m. until sunset, and the heat is wicked.

"I get on very well with the Arabs, they are a very independent lot, all armed to the teeth. The Sheik is very helpful, and brings presents of sheep and tomatoes. When I call at the different places I have to drink their beastly coffee and sherbet, and eat melons. This country is easily the prettiest and best in 'MESPOTS.' The river is lined with date palms, and all sorts of trees and shrubs, with grass near the water, but the country round is absolutely flat with irrigation channels every few yards. We lived in tents at first, but have now built mud huts, as we are likely to be here some months."

Lieutenant Savage fortunately did not disappear, and returned in due course to North Staffordshire.

Lieutenant G. W. S. Sherratt, who went out in the ranks with the 1st/5th, and in his letters described the first days out in FRANCE, was wounded on July 1st, 1916, at GOMMECOURT. He was subsequently given a commission in the North Staffs., and went out to the depôt of the 7th North Staffs. in Southern INDIA, with a draft of 5th North Staffordshire men. Later on, in the Summer of 1918, he joined the 7th North Staffs. in MESOPOTAMIA, and went with the expedition to BAKU on the CASPIAN SEA. "Here we met a strong force of Turks, whose idea it was to capture the town. Fortunately we were the first by a short head, and held a line outside the town, and then began some heavy fighting. We were outnumbered by eight or ten to one, but still we held on, getting some assistance from the Armenians. Our Battalion did very well, and the bulk of all the fighting fell on us. I was in some very hot scraps, and cannot even now understand how I got away. On one occasion I was in charge of a picket, and got attacked by five times my number, but my men fought like the heroes they were, and we held them off for five hours. We only had orders to retire when the picket on my left had



PTE. J. T. ALLMAN, M.M.



PTE. G. BENNETT, D.C.M.



PTE. S. J. CLARKE, M.M.



SERGT. F. W. FOSTER, M.M.



SERGT. J. T. GATER, M.M.



SERGT. W. A. HAYES, M.M.



SERGT. T. SHUKER, M.M.



L.-CORPL. G. C. WAIN, M.M.



CORPL. A. E. WORTHINGTON, M.M.



been wiped out, and my men were fighting on three sides, and then I got away with most of my men.

"The same thing happened on several occasions to other pickets, and the way they held on makes me very proud to belong to the old regiment. Unfortunately we left many behind, and we know they died very bravely, fighting to the last.

"On the morning of August 14th, 1918, the Turks attacked in a huge effort to get the town, and again the attacks were nearly all on us. After 24 hours of very hard fighting, we had orders to evacuate the town, and take to the sea. This was a very difficult job, but we got away eventually, and landed in another country, where I still am. Our Battalion made a great name on the last day, both at Headquarters and amongst the other Battalions fighting there. The force commander, in his despatch about the evacuation, said it was due to the magnificent fighting of the British troops, that the thing was possible, 'especially the 7th North Staffs. on the left, and it is impossible to speak too highly of them.'

"In getting away we lost everything, and now all I possess is one pair of shorts, a shirt, a drill tunic, and my socks, boots, and puttees. Just at present I am having a very nice quiet time on an island with about a score of men; we are the only white people here, but the mainland is not far away, and we pass our time away with fishing, boating, and other sports."

Major C. R. Barke went out with the 1st/5th in 1915, and was one of the survivors of the attack on the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT. Subsequently, at the end of 1916, he went out to MESOPOTAMIA, and was with the 1st/4th Dorsetshire Regiment. He had the usual experiences and troubles of that country, and also an attack of sickness. In March, 1918, he was in command of the Battalion in one of the battles when the Turks had retreated from HIT. "We marched all one night as the Brigade in reserve. At 10-30 next morning we got orders to attack a position about three miles away in support of the leading Brigade, which was to be on our left. We moved off in eight lines in artillery formation, taking our ammunition, tools, and Lewis-guns on mules. We soon came under shell fire, but then received word that the enemy had evacuated their position. We pushed on about a mile beyond our objective, and I re-formed the Battalion waiting for orders.

"In the evening we made another attack on a position about two miles away, under an artillery and Machine-gun barrage. We had to cross an enormous 'nullah' about 150 feet deep and 50 yards wide. This had steep limestone-rock sides, which necessitated bunching to get across it. Luckily the barrage kept the Turks fairly quiet, and on reaching their trenches they all held up their hands. I pushed on about another mile without opposition and spent the night in another 'nullah,' with two Companies on outpost. About 100 Turks surrendered to these during the night. In the morning we received

orders to push on again, and were just off when we received word that the battle was over, as the cavalry had got round behind the Turks and taken them all prisoners. We were not sorry, as we had been at it since 10 p.m. the previous night, and both nights had been bitterly cold, and we carried no overcoats, as the days are very hot. Our casualties were very light, and we captured 100 prisoners and some booty." After this fighting the heat of the Summer was the chief enemy, and with the Winter came the news of the Armistice.

Many officers and men, who had served with the 46th and 59th Divisions, and who afterwards went to other Units, gave up their lives. It is impossible to give all the names, but a few will show how heavy were the sacrifices of North Staffordshire.

Acting-Captain James MURPHY joined the 3rd/5th at STOKE, and, after acting as Quartermaster-Sergeant, went out with a draft to the 1st/5th, where he again became Quartermaster-Sergeant. He then returned to ENGLAND, and received his commission. He was again with the 46th Division, but was subsequently transferred to another Unit, and was reported missing. His Colonel gave the following description of his end. "This Unit was very heavily attacked without a pause for eight hours on end by masses of the enemy. Captain Murphy was wounded in the arm early on in the day, but in spite of that he remained with his Company, and did splendid work in repulsing every attack, but in the end, by sheer weight of numbers, the enemy got round the flank and got behind his Company. When we counter-attacked and retook the position he had gone. His leadership and courage on that day are quite beyond all words of praise. He was perfectly splendid. It was mainly due to his great bravery that the Battalion won for itself such fame and honour on that day." (April 15th, 1918.)

Other officers killed in other Units were Captain Leslie JOHNSON, October, 1918, who was wounded at the HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT; Lieutenants LINDOP, September, 1917; Oswald WILSON, March, 1917; T. R. BLAND, July, 1917; Geoffrey BULLOCK, June, 1918 (R.A.F.), and S. A. GRIMWADE, August, 1918.

Another officer, Lieutenant H. Woodward, M.C., who is fortunately still living, had served in the ranks of the 1st/5th, and, having coming through safely on the 13th October, 1915, returned to ENGLAND for his commission. In 1918 he was serving with the 4th North Staffs., which included a large number of old 5th North Staffs. men. Whilst in rest he had an opportunity of visiting the village where the 1st/5th first detrained. He says:—"I visited the chief Café for old times' sake, as it was Colonel Knight's Headquarters. The French young lady now speaks English as well as we do, and she told me she first received an English lesson from one of the men of the 5th North Staffs., and she showed me a Stafford badge which was given her. She has always had



the Café full of British officers of all sorts and conditions since then, but she remembers the old 5th as the best lot of Englishmen she has had in the Café."

On October 18th, 1918, the 4th North Staffs. had "a big show," in which they captured 300 prisoners and eight field-guns. One of the prisoners was an officer who wore white kid gloves, and had a kit which included silken pillows, and would have required ten men to carry it all up to the front Line.

There are very many other letters from officers and men giving their experiences, and all take a pride in belonging to a North Staffordshire Battalion. One large draft marching through LONDON, in April, 1918, sang the refrain of "We are the Stafford Boys," and the citizens consequently came out in crowds to see them. One of the drummers who went out in April, 1918, says in a letter:—"I hear that all the old drummers are out now. I hope they are all well. It is a pity we could not keep together, but we have to put up with things like that in these times, but, like all the Staffordshire lads, we go about with smiles on our faces, and our motto is, 'Carry on, and keep a good name for the Battalion to which we belong.'"

This was the spirit which existed all through the War, from those early days when soldiering was a novelty, through the bitter years when there seemed no end, through the disasters of the Spring of 1918, through the triumphs of that Summer, until at last the end came with amazing suddenness, almost equalling the suddenness of the beginning in the fatal August of 1914. This was indeed the spirit that brought us Victory, a true spirit of patriotism and "esprit de corps," nowhere better seen than in the old 5th North Staffords.

FINIS.



# APPENDIX.

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## LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE 5th NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE REGIMENT, OR CONNECTED THEREWITH.

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Captain Thomas Guy Abbots.  
Captain Charles Nield Adams.  
2nd Lieutenant Walter Farmer Adams. Wounded March, 1917.  
Lieutenant Robert Basil Cantley Aked. M.C. Killed March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant David Alexander. Wounded at Messines, May 7th, 1915.  
Major Harold Pearman Allaway. M.C. Wounded November 19th, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant William Stephenson Angus. (1/6th.)  
2nd Lieutenant John Thomas Arnold.  
2nd Lieutenant Leonard Arrowsmith.  
2nd Lieutenant Kenneth Aynsley. Wounded August 3rd, 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Ronald Walker Aynsley. Killed June 15th, 1915 (Messines).  
  
Lieutenant William Edward Baines.  
Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Alexander Bannerman, Bart.  
2nd Lieutenant Richard Ball.  
Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Reginald Barke. Mentioned in Despatches April 15th, 1918, and February, 1919, "for distinguished and gallant services and devotion to duty." (Dorset Regiment.)  
2nd Lieutenant John William Bartlam.  
Captain Roderick Barron (1/6th). M.C. June 3rd, 1919.  
Captain Thomas Bassett. M.C. Wounded August 31st, 1916.  
Lieutenant A. Beach. (No details to hand.)  
Lieutenant Samuel Beard.  
2nd Lieutenant Thomas Beard.  
Lieutenant Wilfrid Frank Belcher. Died of Wounds at Flesquières, December 17th, 1917.  
Captain Frank Dunn Bennett. Killed March 21st, 1918.  
2nd Lieutenant F. Bennion.  
Lieutenant Cyril Aloysius Benson.  
Lieutenant Conrad Beresford.  
2nd Lieutenant William Arthur Beresford. Taken prisoner March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant John Douglas Beswick. Wounded October 13th, 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Cyril Leslie Bickley.

- Lieutenant William Henry Billington. Wounded January 22nd, 1919.  
Captain Herbert Duncombe Bindley. (Royal Engineers.)  
Lieutenant Joseph Alfred Bird. Wounded at Loos, October, 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Nigel Fyfe Watson Bishop. Killed October 13th, 1915.  
Major Oliver Chetwynd Bladen. Twice mentioned in Despatches, April 17th and May 24th, 1918.  
Captain William Norman Bladen. M.C. Wounded March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant Thomas Russell Bland. Killed July 20th, 1917.  
Brevet-Colonel Albert Edward Blizzard. T.D.  
Lieutenant Robert Boulton Bloore.  
Captain James Blower. (6th.)  
2nd Lieutenant Neville Blunt.  
2nd Lieutenant Oswald William Boddington. Killed October 13th, 1915.  
Lieutenant D. H. Bodley.  
Lieutenant Ralph Peter Bolton. Wounded at Lens, July 1st, 1917.  
Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Edmund Boote. T.D. Killed at Gommecourt, July 1st, 1916.  
2nd Lieutenant Horace Booth.  
Lieutenant William Thompson Bostock. (M.G.C.)  
Lieutenant Arthur Wardle Boulton. Wounded at Lens, July 1st, 1917.  
Lieutenant Bertram Frederick Boulton. M.M. (Sherwood Foresters.)  
2nd Lieutenant William Aubrey Bowers. Died of Wounds at Gommecourt, July 2nd, 1916.  
Lieutenant Alfred Arthur Bowler.  
2nd Lieutenant Frank Bracey.  
2nd Lieutenant Wilfred Ronald Bracey.  
Lieutenant Kenneth Roy Brain.  
2nd Lieutenant George Brayford.  
2nd Lieutenant William Elias Brideaux. (Labour Corps.)  
2nd Lieutenant Dudley Edwards Bridgwood. Died of Wounds, October 10th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Sampson Bromley Bridgwood. M.C.  
Lieutenant Frank Ewart Brindley. Died of Wounds, October 4th, 1918.  
Lieutenant George William Broadhurst.  
Captain Alec Grantham Sagar-Musgrave-Brooksbank. M.C.  
2nd Lieutenant George Bolney Brown.  
Lieutenant Henry Sanderson Leslie Brown. Twice Wounded, August, 1915, and June, 1916.  
Lieutenant William Stanley Alston Brown.  
Major Edgar Harold Brunt. (R.A.M.C.)  
2nd Lieutenant Albert George Buckle. Wounded at Ypres, September 26th, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Thomas Bull. Wounded April 15th, 1915.

- Lieutenant Geoffrey Ernest Bullock. (R.A.F.) Killed June 16th, 1918.  
Lieutenant-Colonel William Burnett. D.S.O., M.C. Died of Wounds, July 3rd, 1916, Gommecourt.  
Captain David Burrell.  
Captain Frank Eliot Burt. Killed October 3rd, 1918. Belgian "Ordre de la Couronne" (Chevalier). Croix de Guerre.  
2nd Lieutenant Charles William Butterfield. Killed at Lens, May 11th, 1917.  
Lieutenant William Arthur Buxton. (M.G.C.)
- Major Charles Caddick-Adams. M.C. Twice mentioned in Despatches—"For distinguished service in connection with Military operations in France and Flanders." (M.G.)  
Lieutenant Percy Gladwyn Calladine.  
Captain Arthur John Campbell. Wounded October 13th, 1915. Mentioned in Despatches.  
Major George Capron. Mentioned in Despatches. (5th Res.)  
Captain Eric Carhart. M.C. Wounded at Ypres, September 26th, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur Chamberlain. Died in hospital, February 11th, 1919.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur Donald Chapman. Killed at Gommecourt, July 1st, 1916.  
Captain Arthur Humphrey Charlton. D.S.O., M.C., Croix de Guerre. Twice wounded.  
Captain Harold Edward Cherry. (5th Res.)  
Lieutenant Samuel William Chester. Wounded October 31st, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Hastings Clay.  
Lieutenant Percy J. Cliff. Killed near Lens, June 15th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Harold Clive. Wounded at Hohenzollern Redoubt. Mentioned in Communiqué, March 27th, 1919.  
Major Harry Clive.  
Captain Lawrence Clive. Wounded April 30th, 1915. Mentioned for services, February, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur Edward Cockayne. Killed at Lens, July 1st, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Henry Edward Colesworthy.  
Lieutenant Albert Cook.  
Captain Joseph William Cook. (R.A.F.)  
Lieutenant Edward Moseley Cope. Wounded September 27th, 1917. Killed June 13th, 1919. (2nd N. Staffs.)  
Lieutenant Sidney Keates Cope. Wounded at Lens, June 28th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Leslie Milner Copeland. (R.A.F.)  
Lieutenant Reginald Wallace Copland. Killed July 16th, 1919. (Indian Army, Afghanistan.)  
2nd Lieutenant Frank Edward Corp.  
Captain Arthur Cotterill. Killed March 21st, 1918.

Captain Arnold Robinson Cotton.

2nd Lieutenant Cyril Seymour Couchman. Killed May 8th, 1917.

Captain W. Leslie Coulton. (R.A.F.)

Lieutenant Stanley Clifford Coulter.

Captain William Eric Cowlshaw. M.C. (Signalling Officer.)

2nd Lieutenant Ronald Foster Cowlshaw.

Major A. Cozens. (23rd Rifle Brigade.) (No details known.)

2nd Lieutenant Reginald Craddock. Killed March 21st, 1918.

Captain Herbert Ronald Cullwick.

2nd Lieutenant Alfred Charles Joseph Curtis.

Captain Henry William Darling.

Lieutenant Arthur Cyril Richards Davies. Died October 27th, 1915.

2nd Lieutenant Frederick Davies. Killed September 12th, 1918.

Lieutenant Henry Robert Griffith Davies. Killed October 13th, 1915.

2nd Lieutenant William Percy Davis.

Lieutenant Alfred Vincent Davison.

Lieutenant Frederick Ernest Davison. Wounded 22nd May, 1918.

2nd Lieutenant Oswald Stephen Bernard Dawes. Killed at Gavrelle, May 8th, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant Daniel Derry. Died of Wounds, April 18th, 1918.

Captain and Quartermaster George Robert Dewsnap. Wounded in eye, July, 1916.

2nd Lieutenant Charles Bebbington Dilworth.

2nd Lieutenant Geoffrey Stuart Dix. Killed at Wulverghem, May 6th, 1915.

Lieutenant Wilfred Wentworth Dobson.

Hon. Colonel William Warrington Dobson. V.D.

2nd Lieutenant William Norman Doley. Wounded June 29th, 1917.

Major C. C. Dowding. D.S.O., M.C.

Lieutenant Ralph H. Downing. M.M. Wounded at Gommecourt, July 1st, 1916. (Att. R.B.)

2nd Lieutenant Reginald Arthur Ashton Downs. (Flying Corps.)

Lieutenant Charles Lionel Dunn. (Durham L.I.)

Lieutenant John Dutton.

2nd Lieutenant Edward Dickens Ede. Died June 13th, 1918.

Lieutenant Charles Edwards. Wounded at Ypres, August, 1917. (M.G.C.)

Captain Philip Frederick Ellis.

2nd Lieutenant John Edgar Bolsover Ellison. Wounded August, 1916.

Lieutenant Emerson. (No details procurable.)

Lieutenant Herbert Edward Emery.

2nd Lieutenant Samuel Epstein. Wounded December 2nd, 1917.

Lieutenant George Ettle.



Lieutenant Hubert Percy Evans. Wounded November 10th, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant William Enoch Evans.

2nd Lieutenant Ronald Malcolm Ewers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Edward Flynn Fawcus. D.S.O., M.C., awarded  
for distinguished services in France and at Cape Helles. Wounded.

Lieutenant Stanley Challoner Fawcus. Wounded July 1st, 1916.

Lieutenant William Henry Fitchford.

2nd Lieutenant Herbert William Fitzgerald. M.M.

Captain and Adjutant James Hamilton Fleming. Killed October 13th, 1915.

Captain Gilbert Harding Fletcher. Killed at Gommecourt, July 2nd, 1916.

Captain Harold Jack Flowers.

2nd Lieutenant Wilfred Gordon Forester.

2nd Lieutenant Oswald Fosbrooke. (Cyclist Corps.)

Captain Thomas Brereton Foster. (Tank Corps.)

Lieutenant and Adjutant George Dacre Fox. M.C.

Lieutenant Charles James Grosvenor Gafford. (Tank Corps.)

Major Humphrey Percival Gamon. O.B.E. Twice mentioned in Despatches.

2nd Lieutenant James Harold Garbett.

Lieutenant John Francis Gardner. Wounded August, 1915.

Lieutenant Henry Reginald Aked Garnett. Wounded at Lens, July 1st, 1917.

Captain Harold Deighton Gibson. M.C. Mentioned in Despatches, "For  
valuable services rendered in connection with the War." (Lewis M.G.)

Lieutenant Joseph Forsyth Gimson.

2nd Lieutenant Maurice Herbert Glover. Wounded.

2nd Lieutenant William Goddard.

Major John Goodacre. C.F., M.C. Senior Chaplain to 59th (North Midland)  
Division. Mentioned in Despatches.

Captain Clarence Richard Goss. Twice wounded.

2nd Lieutenant Raymond George Frederic Goss. Killed August 13th, 1915,  
at Hill 60.

Lieutenant Tom Banks Gossling. Wounded at Bourslon Wood, 2nd Decem-  
ber, 1917. (5th Res.)

Major Cecil Erskine Graham. Killed at Lens, July 1st, 1917. (Border Regt.)

2nd Lieutenant Robert Gray.

2nd Lieutenant Basil Green. M.C. Killed at Lens, July 1st, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant Allan Henry Barrett Greene.

Captain and Adjutant Vincent Edward Green. M.C., Croix de Guerre.

Major Henry Frank Green. Mentioned in Despatches, "For valuable services  
rendered in connection with the War," May 25th, 1917. (R.E.)

2nd Lieutenant John Wellesley Greeves. Killed at Lens, July 1st, 1917.

Captain Harold Gregory. Mentioned in Despatches, November 8th, 1918.

- 2nd Lieutenant S. Greville. Killed near Le Verguier, April 19th, 1917.  
Captain Leo Cowley Grice. M.C. Wounded and taken prisoner, March 21st, 1918.  
Major Joseph Griffith. T.F. Decoration.  
Lieutenant Sidney Arthur Grimwade. Killed August 4th, 1918. (R.N.A.S.)  
Captain Frederick Martyn Grose.
- 2nd Lieutenant Bert Halfpenny.  
Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur John Hall. T.D.  
2nd Lieutenant Alan George Hammersley. Killed at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Robert Stevens Hammersley. Wounded at Loos, October, 1915. (R.W. Fusiliers.)  
Lieutenant Vincent Stanford Hammersley. (Tank Corps.)  
2nd Lieutenant Harold Harbage.  
Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Sparling Harding. Mentioned by Lord Haig.  
Lieutenant John William Abercromby Harke. Wounded March, 1918.  
2nd Lieutenant William Ingram Harper. M.C. and Bar. Mentioned in Despatches, November 8th, 1918.  
Captain and Quartermaster George Frederick Harris.  
2nd Lieutenant Leonard Healey Harrison.  
2nd Lieutenant Richard James Harvey. Wounded at Loos, Somme, and Cambrai.  
Lieutenant Stephen John Hawthorn. (Flying Corps.)  
Captain Walter Hayward. M.C. Killed March 21st, 1918. Mentioned in Despatches. (2nd N. Staffs.)  
2nd Lieutenant Ernest Bradford Heath.  
Lieutenant Frederick Stanley Heath. (Labour Corps.)  
Lieutenant James Leigh Heath. Wounded November 2nd, 1915. (Labour Company.)  
Lieutenant Richard Heaton. Wounded 1917.  
Lieutenant Cyril Edward Hedge. M.C. 26th July, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant James Leonard Higginbotham.  
2nd Lieutenant Alfred Hill. Killed September 12th, 1917.  
Captain Norman Hammond Hill. (R.A.M.C.)  
2nd Lieutenant Albert Harry Stanley Hinchliffe. Wounded September 13th, 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Charles Duncan Hinmars.  
Lieutenant Bernard Ramsdale Hipkins.  
2nd Lieutenant Harold Thomas Hobson.  
2nd Lieutenant Shirley Hodgett.  
Captain Jonathan Hodgkinson. Wounded at Ypres, September 26th, 1917. (Tank Corps.)

Captain T. A. Hogg. Killed March 21st, 1918.  
2nd Lieutenant Lennox C. Holman.  
2nd Lieutenant Charles Fifield Holtom. Died of wounds near Ransart,  
August 4th, 1916.  
2nd Lieutenant Thomas Henry Horspool. M.C.  
2nd Lieutenant Horace Hough. Wounded near Ypres. (R.A.F.)  
Lieutenant Arthur Howard.  
Lieutenant George Bernard Howson. (Durham L.I.)  
Lieutenant Alfred Henry Hughes.  
Lieutenant John Harold Hughes.  
2nd Lieutenant William Henry Hulme.  
Lieutenant Godfrey Murray Humphry.  
2nd Lieutenant Eric Cecil Hurley.

Lieutenant Harold Walters Jackson. Mentioned in Despatches.  
2nd Lieutenant Frederick William James.  
2nd Lieutenant Herbert Horace Jarrett. Died of wounds, December 6th, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant John Jarvis. Killed about March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant Darcy Guy Jeffcott.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur John Jenkinson. Wounded in Gallipoli, 1915.  
Captain Arnold Leslie Johnson. Killed October 14th, 1918.  
Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Johnson. D.S.O. Mentioned in Despatches. T.F.  
Decoration. Wounded and taken prisoner, March 21st, 1918.  
Captain Reginald Tavernor Johnson. Killed October 13th, 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Roland Finnis Johnson. Taken prisoner at Lens, July 1st,  
1917.  
Lieutenant R. Johnson. (No details procurable.)  
Lieutenant William Johnson. (R.N.A.S.)  
2nd Lieutenant Cyril Clewes Jolliffe. (R.A.F.)  
Lieutenant Alfred Major Jones. Wounded at Lens, July 1st, 1917. Taken  
prisoner at Bullecourt, March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant Dyfrig Gwyn Jarvis Jones. Wounded July 1st, 1916.  
Lieutenant Leonard Howson Jones.  
Lieutenant G. E. Jones. (No details procurable.)

Captain Charles Reginald Keary.  
Captain John Keeling. (M.G.)  
2nd Lieutenant Frederick Kent.  
2nd Lieutenant William Walter Kilworth. Wounded March 14th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Alfred John King. Died of wounds, June 17th, 1918.  
Lieutenant G. L. King. Taken prisoner, March 21st, 1918. (Att. 5th North.)  
Colonel John Hall Knight. Killed at Hohenzollern Redoubt, October 13th,  
1915.

Lieutenant Thomas West Knowles. Wounded.

Lieutenant Charles Richard Krell. Mentioned in Despatches, November 8th, 1918.

Lieutenant D. H. Krauss. Killed at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant James William Lansbury.

Lieutenant George Lionel Lathbury. Died February 24th, 1919.

Lieutenant William Arthur Lawrence.

2nd Lieutenant Edward Barrett Lee. Wounded.

2nd Lieutenant Harry Lee.

2nd Lieutenant George John Leek. (M.G.C.)

Lieutenant Harold Arthur Legg.

Captain and Adjutant George Lemon. Twice wounded. Twice mentioned in Despatches.

2nd Lieutenant Thomas Chamberlain Levesley.

2nd Lieutenant Thomas Lewis.

Lieutenant Thomas Edmund Lewty. Killed at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant Herbert Cyril Lindop. Killed September 20th, 1917.

Captain George Roberston Lipp, M.B. M.C. Taken prisoner March 21st, 1918. (R.A.M.C.)

Captain Leonard Mostyn Llewellyn.

Lieutenant Fred Wildblood Llewelyn. Wounded and gassed at Ypres, September 25th, 1917.

Captain Thomas Lockett. (Tank Corps.)

Captain and Quartermaster William Henry Percival Loney.

Lieutenant John Muncaster Lovatt. Taken prisoner August 12th, 1917. (Att. K.R.R.C.)

2nd Lieutenant John Edmund Lowe. M.C. Killed at Lens, July 1st, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant Theodore Linley Lowe. (R.A.F.)

2nd Lieutenant Charles Arthur Lowndes. Killed at Loos, October 13th, 1915.

2nd Lieutenant Charles Edward Holden Loxton. Died of wounds at Messines, May 23rd, 1915.

2nd Lieutenant Leslie de Lozey.

2nd Lieutenant Clarence Clifford Lyall.

Lieutenant William Lunn. M.M.

Captain Harold Ernest MacGowan.

2nd Lieutenant Samuel Henry Machin.

Major Henry Patrick Magill. Loyal North Lancs. Regt.

Lieutenant James Roy Malkin.

2nd Lieutenant William Malkin.

Captain Isaac John Harold Malone. M.C.

Lieutenant Cyril Ernest Marchant.

- Captain Charles John Beech Masefield. M.C. Taken prisoner and died of wounds near Lens, July 2nd, 1917.
- 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Henry Mason.
- Captain Francis Edward Mason.
- 2nd Lieutenant Harry Mason. Twice wounded: at the Somme and Arras.
- Lieutenant John Mellard Mason.
- Captain and Adjutant Oswald Henry Mason. M.C. Mentioned in Despatches, 1st March, 1919, "For gallant and distinguished services in the Field."
- Lieutenant Ronald Charlesworth Mate. M.C. (Labour Corps.) Twice wounded.
- Lieutenant Frederick Leopold May. M.C. Wounded. Mentioned in Despatches, 1917.
- 2nd Lieutenant Frank Bertram Mayer. Killed October 13th, 1915.
- 2nd Lieutenant Joseph McKnight.
- Lieutenant Leo Michael McKnight.
- 2nd Lieutenant Duncan Walter McNeil.
- Captain Alfred Maurice McVay. (M.G.C.)
- Captain Henry Layton Mead. D.C.M., Médaille Militaire. Wounded.
- Captain (Major V.B.) James Lionel Meakin.
- Lieutenant Kenneth William Glenly Meakin. Killed at Messines, May 16th, 1915.
- Lieutenant Walter Meakin.
- 2nd Lieutenant Richard Bartlett Mellard. Killed at Gommecourt, July 2nd, 1916.
- 2nd Lieutenant Percy Mellor. Killed October 13th, 1915.
- Captain Archibald Underwood Millar. M.C. (R.A.M.C.)
- 2nd Lieutenant Charles William Miller. (R.E.)
- Lieutenant Percival Moore.
- 2nd Lieutenant Horace William Morrall. Twice wounded.
- 2nd Lieutenant Evan Price Morris. Killed October 8th, 1918.
- 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Henry Moss.
- 2nd Lieutenant Ernest Sumner Moss. Killed at Lens, July 1st, 1917.
- Lieutenant Percy Horace Moss.
- Captain Gordon Mountford. (R.A.F.) Killed June 13th, 1916.
- Captain C. E. Munro, C.F.
- Captain James Murphy. Killed April 15th, 1918. (2nd/6th.)
- 2nd Lieutenant William Myers. Wounded 1916.
- Captain Frederick John Newton. M.C and Bar (for gallantry in the Field), Médaille Militaire. Twice wounded. (Att. 1st N. Staffs.)
- Lieutenant John Lewis Newton. Twice wounded.
- Lieutenant Cecil Robert Nicholls. Mentioned in Despatches, April 7th, 1918. (Tank Corps.)

Lieutenant Cecil Jack Noke. Wounded at Lens, July 1st, 1917.  
Captain Reginald J. Northcote. (C.F.)

Captain and Adjutant William Robert Ollis. M.C.  
Lieutenant Gordon Cecil Oswell. (Indian Army.)  
Lieutenant Harold Lloyd Oswell.  
Lieutenant John Oulton.

Captain George Howard Paget. (Indian Army.)  
2nd Lieutenant Ernest William Parkinson. Wounded September 29th, 1918.  
(1st/6th.)  
Captain J. J. Parlow. (C.F.)  
Lieutenant and Assistant Adjutant Harry Gordon Pascoe. (6th.)  
Captain Alexander Grahame Paxton. M.C. Twice wounded.  
Lieutenant Albert Peach. Twice wounded.  
Lieutenant William Thomas Pemberton. Wounded September 26th, 1915.  
Lieutenant S. B. Pendleton. (No details procurable.)  
Captain William Pendleton.  
Lieutenant Howard Henry Pickford. Wounded.  
Captain Frederick Temple Pinfold. (R.E.)  
Lieutenant Arthur William Keith Plant. (Labour Corps.)  
2nd Lieutenant Wilfrid Plant. Killed September 28th, 1918.  
2nd Lieutenant Harold Platt. Twice wounded.  
Major Harold Pochin. M.C. Wounded Hohenzollern Redoubt.  
2nd Lieutenant William Marcus Noel Pollard. Killed near Le Verguier,  
April 10th, 1917.  
Lieutenant William Cecil Poyser. Wounded at Hulluch, September 1st, 1917.  
Lieutenant Harry Pratt. Twice wounded.  
2nd Lieutenant Thomas Harry Preston. Died of wounds, September 30th,  
1918.  
Captain Spencer Milton Price.  
Lieutenant Wilfred Proctor.  
Lieutenant Jack William Proffitt.  
2nd Lieutenant George Purslow. Killed October 12th, 1918.  
  
Major Thomas Hervey Rabone. C.F. Senior Chaplain to North Staffs. Regt.  
Captain Maurice Radcliffe.  
2nd Lieutenant Thomas Ford Rathbone. Killed at Ypres, September 26th,  
1917.  
Captain Benjamin Harold Rayner. Killed near Lens, June 14th, 1917.  
Captain Harry Stapeley Read. (Labour Corps.)  
2nd Lieutenant Henry Reeves. Wounded September 27th, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur Atherton Rider.



Captain Henry Akroyd Ridgway. Killed October 13th, 1915.  
Lieutenant and Quartermaster John Howard Riley.  
2nd Lieutenant Harry Ringham. M.C.  
Captain and Adjutant George Herman Rittner.  
Lieutenant Cecil Herbert Robinson. (R.E.)  
Lieutenant Eli Robinson. Killed at Gommecourt, July 2nd, 1916.  
2nd Lieutenant Harry Robinson. Killed April 15th, 1918.  
Lieutenant William Henry Robinson. (Att. K.R.R.C.)  
Lieutenant Percy Bourne Ross. Taken prisoner at Lens, July 1st, 1917.  
Lieutenant Joseph Rowley. (Signalling Officer.)  
Lieutenant and Quartermaster John William Rowley.  
2nd Lieutenant Alan Gladney Russell.

Lieutenant Henry Edwin Salt. Wounded at Ypres, September 26th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Frederick George Savage.  
Lieutenant Percy John Score. Gassed November 30th, 1917.  
Lieutenant George Norman Scott.  
Captain Alwynne Twyford Scrivener. Died of wounds, near Lens, July 5th, 1917. Mentioned in Despatches, November 7th, 1917, "For gallant and distinguished service."  
Captain Wulfric Walter Scrivener.  
Captain Mellard Settle. Taken prisoner March 21st, 1918. Died from influenza and pneumonia, December 23rd, 1918.  
2nd Lieutenant Percy Norman Shelley.  
Captain and Adjutant Vincent Bob Shelley. Taken prisoner, March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant George William Sterndale Sherratt. M.M. Wounded at Gommecourt, July 1st, 1916. (7th North Staffs.)  
Captain John Guy Shorter. (Brig. M.G.O.)  
Lieutenant Charles Lionel Silvester. (R.F.C.) Wounded 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur Charles Sewell Simon.  
2nd Lieutenant Charles George Simons. M.C.  
Captain Norman Woodford Slater.  
Lieutenant Bernard Arthur Smith.  
Lieutenant Herbert Evans Smith. Died of wounds near Lens, June 18th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Joseph Ernest Smith.  
Lieutenant William Smith.  
Lieutenant Leslie Colin Snelling. Wounded at Bourslon Wood, December 1st, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Arthur Lionel Llewellyn Sneyd.  
Captain Everard Nixon Buckworth-Herne-Soame. Killed at Ecoust, March 21st, 1918.  
Lieutenant Wilfred John Sparrow. Wounded March 26th, 1916.

Lieutenant Reginald Spraggins.

2nd Lieutenant Harold Stacey. Killed August 4th, 1918.

Lieutenant L. Staniforth. M.C. (Tank Corps.)

2nd Lieutenant Arthur Edwin Stearn. M.C.

Captain William Marshall Grose Stocker.

Captain and Adjutant Harry Stoneman. M.C., "for gallantry in the Field."  
Wounded 1918. (Labour Corps.)

Lt.-Colonel Henry Howard Stoney. D.S.O., "For distinguished services in the Field." Wounded August 22nd, 1918. (Rhine Army.)

Lieutenant H. St. John B. Strang. Severely wounded at Loos, September 25th, 1915.

Lieutenant Floyd Thomas Sudlow.

2nd Lieutenant Thomas Boyer Swain. M.M. Wounded.

Captain John Swales. M.C. and Bar. Wounded at Loos, October 13th, 1915.  
Mentioned in Despatches, March, 1917.

Captain and Quartermaster George Henry Swann.

Captain Thomas Hutchinson Sabine Swanton. (East Surrey Regt.) Acting  
Lt.-Colonel.

Captain Francis Edward Taylor. Mentioned in Despatches, June, 1917.

Lieutenant Eric Sydney William Thomas. Wounded at Ypres, September 26th, 1917.

2nd Lieutenant Charles Frederick Thompson. M.C.

2nd Lieutenant Harold Thompson.

Lieutenant Joseph Beech Thompson. Wounded at Lens, October, 1917.

Major Thomas Ernest Tildesley. M.C. Taken prisoner March 21st, 1918.

Lieutenant Albert Joseph Todd. (Flying Corps.)

2nd Lieutenant George Henry Tortoiseshell. Killed at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.

Lieutenant Joseph Townsend. Killed March 21st, 1918.

Lieutenant Robert Maxwell Trimble. Killed March 21st, 1918. "Brought to the notice of the Secretary of State for War for distinguished services rendered," January 21st, 1917.

Lieutenant F. R. Tunnicliffe. Wounded near Ypres, August 3rd, 1915.  
Wounded and taken prisoner, March 21st, 1918.

Lieutenant Rowland Appleton Varley. (Flying Corps.)

Lieutenant Hartley A. Wareham.

2nd Lieutenant Alfred Charles Watkin. Killed at Gommecourt, July 2nd, 1916.

Captain F. H. C. Watson. M.B. (R.A.M.C.)

- 2nd Lieutenant Harold Aubrey Watson. Wounded at Havrincourt Wood, 1917.  
Lieutenant Henry Etherington Watson. (M.G.C.)  
Lieutenant Hugh St. John Banner Watson. M.C. Taken prisoner March 21st, 1918.  
2nd Lieutenant William Henry Cecil Wayte.  
2nd Lieutenant Harold Dalton Webb.  
Captain Arthur Felix Wedgwood. Killed at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.  
Lieutenant D. H. Wells. (No details procurable.)  
Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Edward Wenger. M.C. and two Bars. Wounded at Lens, July 1st, 1917.  
Lieutenant Cedric Hawkins Whitfield. Wounded at Hill 60, August 23rd, 1915.  
2nd Lieutenant Edward Hunt Whitmore. (R.A.F.)  
Lieutenant Douglas Rhead Wildblood. Wounded. Mentioned in Despatch, November 7th, 1917. (M.G.)  
2nd Lieutenant Richard Harold Wilks. Killed at Bourlon Wood, November 30th, 1917.  
Lieutenant George Emmanuel Elford Williams. Wounded and taken prisoner at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.  
Lieutenant P. E. Williams. Gas-shelled, May 8th, 1917. (M.G.C.)  
Lieutenant Victor Erle Nash Williams.  
Major Edgar Arthur Wilson. M.C. Mentioned in *Gazette*, May 25th, 1917, "For valuable services rendered in connection with the War," also November 7th, 1917.  
2nd Lieutenant Oswald Wilson. Killed March 19th, 1917.  
Captain Samuel Brammer Wilton. M.C. Killed at Bucquoy, March 14th, 1917.  
Lieutenant Arthur Leslie Wimshurst. (Flying Corps.)  
Captain Thomas Wint. M.C. Twice wounded.  
2nd Lieutenant Edward William Wittering. (M.G.C.)  
2nd Lieutenant Bernard Cyril Wood.  
Lieutenant Cecil Langley Wood. (M.G.)  
Lieutenant Leslie Thomas Wood.  
2nd Lieutenant Norman Harry Wood.  
Lieutenant Reginald Cecil Mervyn Wood. Wounded June 24th, 1916. (East Africa.)  
2nd Lieutenant Reginald Harry Wood. Killed at Neuville St. Vaast, March 31st, 1916.  
Captain Sidney Harold Wood.  
Captain William Harold Wood. (1st/6th.)  
Captain William Thomas Wood. (R.A.M.C.) M.O. to Battalion 1915-1916.  
Lieutenant Claude Ambrose Woodger.

Captain Harold Woodward. M.C., M.M. (4th North Staffs.)

2nd Lieutenant William Woodward.

Captain Guy Jukes Worthington. Wounded October 13th, 1915. Mentioned in Despatches, June, 1916. (M.G.)

Lieutenant George Shadrach Young. M.C.

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### DETAILS OF AWARDS.

Lieutenant R. B. C. Aked. M.C.

"For great gallantry and devotion to duty during the night of December 14th/15th, 1917, East of Flesquières, during and after a raid on the enemy's trenches. After gaining and reaching the objective, finding his brother officer severely wounded, he, with the help of his Platoon Sergeant, carried him back to our lines, a distance of 400 yards. On his return, finding that one of our wounded had been left behind in the enemy's lines, he, together with his Platoon Sergeant, again went out and brought in the wounded man. Still undaunted, they made two further journeys to the enemy's lines, searching for wounded, and remained out until the enemy reoccupied the position. By so doing, he set a fine example of courage to his men, deserving of the highest praise."

2nd Lieutenant (Acting Captain) H. P. Allaway. (Att. 2nd Royal Berks. Regt.)  
M.C. 11th May, 1917.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He handled his Company in a most able manner, and effected a successful withdrawal at a critical time. Later he took command of the assaulting troops, and in spite of the most trying circumstances, succeeded in keeping them well in hand." This action took place at Bouchavesnes, 4th March, 1917.

Lieutenant (Acting Captain) T. Bassett. M.C. 16th September, 1918.

"Whilst in command of a Company who were digging themselves in, this officer walked about in the open in broad daylight exposed to heavy fire, encouraging them in their work. He led up ration parties under fire, and, when acting 2nd in Command was wounded, he took charge of two Companies and kept the men at their posts. Though blown over three times and slightly wounded, he continued his duties, and kept up the morale of his men."

Captain W. N. Bladen. M.C. 31st December, 1917.

"On the afternoon of November 30th, during the enemy's counter-attack from Fontaine, this officer displayed the highest qualities of leadership and courage in superintending the defence of the sector held by his Company. . . . By his excellent behaviour and extreme courage and cheeriness under fire, he set a fine example to his Company of cool bravery, and imbued in all ranks the determination to hold on at all costs, and to him is due in a large measure the success of the defence of his sector."

Lieutenant S. B. Bridgwood. M.C. 14th November, 1916. *London Gazette*.

"Owing to difficulties in getting through wire he found himself with only four men in an enemy sap. His vigorous action, presence of mind, and pluck, enabled him successfully to explore dug-outs, driving off many enemy. The success of the raid was largely due to his bravery and initiative."

Lieutenant A. G. Sagar-Musgrave-Brooksbank. M.C. 16th September, 1918.

"The Battalion had suffered very heavy casualties in resisting for two days a severe bombardment and a determined enemy attack. This officer was unremitting in his devotion to duty, continually visiting his posts, and by his gallant behaviour imparting steadiness and resolution to the troops, who were somewhat shaken by the severity of the situation."

Captain Eric Carhart. M.C. 1st January, 1918.

"Awarded for distinguished Services in the Field."

Lieutenant H. D. Gibson. M.C. 3rd June, 1917. (Att. T.M. Battery.)

"During the attack on Nash Alley, S.-E. of Loos, he showed conspicuous gallantry; he had complete control of the mortars under his command, and kept his guns continuously in action. During the counter-attack his forward guns were completely buried by hostile shelling. He, however, although a terrific barrage was going on at the time, succeeded in bringing his guns back to safety, and placing them in readiness to fire again. He took charge of and collected a party of infantry who were left without an officer, and led them forward to the evacuated trench, and established bombing-posts, afterwards reporting to the Infantry Commander his positions. During the whole of the preliminary period, and during the attack, Lieutenant Gibson showed remarkable courage and devotion to duty, and set a splendid example to his men."

2nd Lieutenant Basil Green. M.C. 25th August, 1917.

"He led a raid with great dash into cellars and dug-outs on the far side of the enemy trenches, inflicting many casualties. Later on he went out into 'No Man's Land,' with one man, and spent an hour searching for wounded near the enemy's wire."

2nd Lieutenant C. E. Hedge. M.C. 26th July, 1917.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During an attack and subsequent consolidation of a position he worked untiringly for seventeen hours, organising and leading bombing parties, strengthening his defences, and making every endeavour to hold a difficult position. He was finally very severely wounded during an enemy counter-attack. He set a magnificent example to all ranks."

Captain G. R. Lipp, M.B. 'R.A.M.C. M.C. April-May, 1917.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He organised a party of bearers (at Arras) and went out under heavy shell-fire and repaired the road which had become impassable for ambulances. Later, when his post was heavily shelled, he remained and attended all wounded in the vicinity, thus setting a splendid example to all."

2nd Lieutenant J. E. Lowe. M.C. 14th November, 1916.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during a raid, prior to which he had gone out with three men to ascertain and mark the gaps in the enemy wire. When the raiding party advanced this officer went back and was able to indicate the best way of evading the difficulties of the wire. The success of the enterprise was greatly due to his careful reconnaissance of the ground."

Lieutenant (Acting Captain) I. J. H. Malone. M.C. 8th March, 1919.

"During the operations on the 3rd and 4th October, 1918, near Sequehart, in the attack on the Fonsomme Line and on Mannequin Hill, this officer showed great coolness and was very conspicuous in the handling of his men and in reorganising "A" Company when their officers were put out of action. He personally directed the operations of both Companies, and during the counter-attack his Company captured 20 prisoners and four Machine-guns. He kept touch with the right Battalion and was of great assistance in organising the line at the final objective."



2nd Lieutenant C. J. B. Masefield. M.C. 25th August, 1917.

"During a raid upon enemy trenches he led his company with great dash and skill under heavy trench-mortar barrage, attacking a party of the enemy single-handed. . . . After inflicting heavy casualties and taking three prisoners he successfully withdrew his Company, having shewn conspicuous gallantry and good leadership throughout."

Lieutenant (Acting Captain) O. H. Mason. M.C. 16th September, 1918.

"He formed a screen through which part of another Battalion was ordered to retire. His excellent disposition enabled this to be done with complete success. When forced later to withdraw his men, he stayed behind with his one remaining Lewis gun, inflicting severe losses on the enemy until his Company had reached its new position. He set a very fine example of courage and good leadership."

Lieutenant (Acting Captain) A. G. Paxton. M.C. 31st May, 1918.

"During the operations S.-E. of Bailleul on April 15th, 1918, Acting Captain Paxton was in command of a Reserve Company. At 2 p.m. the enemy put down a heavy barrage on our front line and afterwards attacked in large numbers. The enemy succeeded in breaking through our lines, and took the position. Captain Paxton immediately led up his Company to counter-attack, succeeding in retaking the position. In spite of exceptionally heavy shelling and Machine-gun fire and repeated attacks by the enemy this officer held on to the position. Although twice wounded he kept control over his men, and supervised the consolidation of the position. He set a fine example of bravery and endurance to his men, and his conduct under heavy shell fire was exceptionally courageous."

Major H. Pochin. M.C. June, 1917.

"Awarded for conspicuous ability and devotion to duty."

2nd Lieutenant Harry Ringham. M.C. November 1919.

"During the attack on Vendegies-au-Bois he displayed gallantry, initiative, and tactical ability of a very high order. He, with his platoon of eight men, reconnoitred, and put out of action at least three enemy machine-guns. His fine action enabled his Company to work forward round Duke's Wood, upon which the enemy resistance collapsed, and the Battalion objectives were obtained."

2nd Lieutenant A. E. Stearn. M.C. 26th July, 1918.

"When sent up to the front line to get information he ran into large parties of the enemy, owing to the heavy mist which prevailed, and came under close fire. Returning to Battalion Headquarters with the information gained, he next collected men of various Units and held a communication trench, protecting the right flank of the Division."

2nd Lieutenant J. Swales. M.C. 25th March, 1917.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the action at Bucquoy on the night of the 13th/14th March, 1917, in establishing a bombing post on our left flank, and holding it for two hours, although heavily counter-attacked by the enemy. When forced to retire through lack of bombs, he withdrew a short distance, and reinforced another post on the left flank, considerably in advance of the line we were holding. He held this post for twelve hours until ordered to withdraw."

Ditto. Bar to M.C. 16th September, 1918.

"The enemy, attacking in very large numbers under cover of heavy artillery fire, had succeeded in taking a position which included several advanced posts, of which this officer was in command. A counter-attack by the Reserve Company of the Battalion drove back the enemy, and he was found to be still holding out with only three men, though completely surrounded. The enemy afterwards broke through at another point, and he covered the withdrawal which then became necessary, only retiring from the house from which he was firing after a hot hand-to-hand engagement with superior numbers. Throughout the day he displayed great courage, and an utter disregard for personal safety."

2nd Lieutenant C. F. Thompson. M.C. 8th October, 1918.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in command of a strong fighting patrol. His party was held up by wire and heavily fired on by Machine-guns and rifles, and he was twice wounded by a bomb. He, nevertheless, continued to command his party, issuing fire orders and inflicting severe casualties on the enemy. He eventually withdrew in good order under heavy fire, after he had used all his bombs. His gallant behaviour and example undoubtedly turned a situation which might otherwise have been a failure into a means of inflicting severe casualties on the enemy."

N.B.—(This took place near Bouzincourt on the night of May 30th/31st, 1918.)

Captain T. E. Tildesley. M.C. 31st December, 1917.

"This officer's Company held a series of disconnected posts, which he visited in broad daylight and in full view of the enemy, encouraging his men, whilst the line was under heavy artillery, machine-gun, and rifle-fire, and the enemy could be seen massing for attack. . . . He set a fine example to his Company of cool bravery . . . and to him is due, in a large measure, the success of the defence of his sector."

2nd Lieutenant H. St. J. B. Watson. M.C. 13th May, 1918.

"He carried out six reconnaissances in preparation for a raid, and obtained information which largely contributed to the success of the operation. He led the raiding party to the assembly position, and personally cut a gap in the enemy's wire under very heavy fire. He showed splendid courage and initiative."

Captain F. E. Wenger. M.C. Bar to M.C. September 17th, 1917.

"Under very heavy machine-gun fire he rallied a Company that had been held up, reorganised the attack, and after very severe hand-to-hand fighting, drove a large number of the enemy, with their machine-guns, into a cellar, where most of them were killed. He pushed forward his attack and accounted for a great many more, showing exceptional dash and a very fine offensive spirit." (M.C. June 3rd, 1916.)

Captain F. E. Wenger. M.C. 2nd Bar, 22nd April, 1918.

"An N.C.O. had left our front line at dawn to endeavour to locate a hostile post, and was badly wounded. He, accompanied by another officer, left our lines with the object of bringing him in. Seeing the N.C.O.'s rifle lying on the edge of a shell-hole, he kept the enemy under fire, while his companion got out of the trench and succeeded in reaching the N.C.O. The accuracy of his fire harassed the enemy considerably, and his comrade was able to carry the N.C.O. back to our lines."

Captain S. B. Wilton. M.C. 4th June, 1917.

"This officer has consistently shewn conspicuous gallantry and coolness under fire during the past two years. He has twice been wounded, once in September, 1915, and the second time in July, 1916. He sets a wonderful example to his Company by his never-failing courage and cheerfulness in dangerous and trying positions."

2nd Lieutenant T. Wint. M.C. February, 1918.

"In daylight he led a party of ten men in a rush upon the enemy trenches, and inflicted heavy casualties on the garrison. He was the last to leave the enemy lines, and, although wounded in two places, he succeeded in crawling back. He has displayed great courage in numerous patrols."

2nd Lieutenant W. Hayward. M.C. 13th May, 1918.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in a raid on the enemy's trenches. Finding the enemy's wire uncut in front of his objective, he rushed forward, cut the wire and led his men through the gap. He then attacked and killed or captured the whole of the enemy garrison, and repulsed a determined counter-attack by which the enemy endeavoured to cut off his retreat. His magnificent courage and determination at critical moments had a most inspiring effect on his men and undoubtedly prevented the enemy from gaining the upper hand."

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